

THIS  
SUNDAY  
EVENING

DUNCAN WILKIE



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**DUNCAN WILKIE**

# THIS SUNDAY EVENING

DUNCAN WILKIE

MIDWEST PRINTING LIMITED  
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# *The Order of the Service*

With the accompanying ritual

Mr. Wilkie: *This I know and this I believe, and upon this the Church of Christ stands.*

The Announcer: (with theme music as background)

*In the quietude and serenity of the vesper hour we bring you the religious period known as "This Sunday Evening," presented each week at this time by Rev. Duncan Wilkie, of Knox United Church, Saskatoon.*

The Evening Meditation.

The Broadcast Service concludes with these words by Mr. Wilkie: (with theme music underneath)

*Soul of the Universe, Light of the mind of man, Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ, we turn to Thee in the quiet of this evening hour, and would join lose ourselves in Thy eternal love and care. Visit us one by one and meet our deeper needs, for we pray in the same and spirit of Christ.*

\* \* \*

*Remember, your origin and destiny are in God, your Master and Saviour is Christ, and your inspiration so to live that others might have life, is the Cross which towers "o'er the wrecks of time."*

*And now into God's gracious care and keeping I commit you.  
The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord make His face to shine upon you  
And be gracious unto you;  
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you  
And give you peace,  
Now and forever.*

The Announcer:

*We have brought you the religious period known as "This Sunday Evening," presented each week at this time.*

## *Foreword*

Knowing of the great shortage of ministers and of vast areas where no church serves, I decided to do what I personally could to help meet that need. Every Sunday evening I have gone down to Radio Station CPQC, which reaches out into and beyond our province, and have broadcast these evening meditations. Now, in the third year of the venture, I publish a few of them in this little book.

Included also are two addresses, "Go Down Again to the Depths" and "The Return to the Source" which I gave on the CBC "Church of the Air." Another, "The Child Grew Up" was heard on the "National Sunday Evening Hour."

My thanks go to the members and friends of Knox United Church, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who have felt the importance of having these broadcasts continued, and who in every way possible have supported the undertaking. Nor am I unmindful of those elsewhere who have assured me that they look forward to these Sunday evening visits together.

DUNCAN WILKIE.

Knox Church Study,  
Saskatoon, Sask.



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## *Your Father and My Father*

*I was never afraid of my father as a child. Why should I ever be apprehensive or fearful of One who is infinitely better than any human father?"*

As I begin this series of Sunday Evening chats with you, perhaps you will not mind if I introduce myself. From my childhood I have loved the out doors. Nature has always spoken to me and I trust it ever shall. I do not think it could have been otherwise. My mother was born and reared in the High lands of Scotland. Every night she fell asleep listening to the music of the sea as it beat incessantly upon the rocky shore-line of that little island of Lewis. My father as a young man homesteaded in the Trachwood Hills and when the day's work was over he would sit on the porch of his little cabin and count the stars as they came out in the gathering dusk one by one. He finally settled on the south arm of the Souris Valley in one of the loveliest and scenic places in Manitoba.

When I was a little lad my father took me with him on hunting excursions through the still woods and along the margin of the lake. He was an unusual hunter. He rarely carried a gun but invariably a camera. I know that I shall ever remember our happy excursions together. Down the steep hillside through the stately birches we would go, then over an expansive ridge where towering oaks stood in permanent splendour and strength. Finally we would make our way beneath the huge elm and ash trees. We would walk ever so softly as we endeavoured to creep up on the mallards, and to see at close range the sandhill crane or his pompous magnificence.

These lines to Nature from the poet Wordsworth have deep significance for me:

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe  
Thou soul, that art the eternity of thought!  
And given to forms and images a breath  
And everlasting motion! not in vain,  
By day or starlight, thou from my first dawn  
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me  
The passions that build up our human soul.

Never shall I forget the look of anxiety that came into my father's face when I explained to him that I had decided to enter the ministry of the Church. You see he simply could not understand how anyone could ever choose to leave God's Paradise a farm. However, I know that one of the happiest days of his life was that on which I returned home after graduation in Arts. He was exceedingly ill and it was not long after this that he was taken from us, but that night after the rest of the family had retired, we had a confidential chat.

"Tell me," he said finally, "have you a big God? University

has not marred for you the unutterable beauty and creative power of the Divine, has it?"

Although many years have elapsed since we laid him to rest on the edge of the Valley overlooking the birches, the oak, the elms and the lake I feel his presence with me tonight as I begin this series of radio talks.

We of the Protestant Church believe very deeply. We have a creed and a basis of faith upon which we stand and in which we find our peace and security. We believe in the living and eternal God our Father revealed to us in the beauty of the natural world but made known to us supremely in Jesus Christ our only Master and Lord. We believe in God. We trust in God. We acknowledge God as Creator of heaven and earth and as that in whom we are confident for we know that irrespective of what the future holds in store God will remain and those who put their trust in Him will not be confounded or disappointed at the last. The Psalmist declared that the earth remains even when the earth trembleth."

We confidently believe that God is ceaselessly present in the human struggle that the folly and sin of man cannot and will not permanently defeat Him and that the long story of the human years is moving slowly but certainly to a final triumph of the good which He has purposed."

Furthermore we trust in the God whom Jesus portrayed. He stated that God is our Father. Any interpretation of religion that is not in keeping with Fatherhood in God is not to be taken seriously. The Church centres in God who loves us with an everlasting love. The God in whom we believe has no favorites. He sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. He is not impressed by your label. Our God is interested in you because you are His child and like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth you.

We believe too in a Saviour God, a God in whom we can go direct to. The God that Jesus portrayed and made real is not a God who is unapproachable or far removed from His children. Rather is he a Father who is always ready to hear and to help us. I was never afraid of my father as a child. Why should I ever be apprehensive or fearful of One who is infinitely better than any human father?

There is however, the searching truth that he sees us as we are, not as we think we are. In the blinding light of his purity and everlasting love we are seen. We might well pray

Soul of the Universe Light of the mind of man Spirit revealed through Jesus Christ we come before Thee in the quiet of this moment and would lay our ourselves in Thy eternal love. Visit us one by one and meet our deepest needs. Cleanse our emotions Purify our souls Refresh us with Thy goodness Give us a vision of love imperishable goodness eternal and influence that never dies

Be with all little children who come up from the gates of the morning. Spare them years of innocence and laughter Inspire those who do

the work of the world to serve in the spirit of Christ. Journey with all who have reached life's sunset, that they might have peace at eventide. Comfort all who are carrying heavy burdens unseen by their fellowmen. Guide the nations so slow to learn the lessons of brotherhood, into the ways of peace.

Tonight our thoughts have been of fatherhood, human and divine. As the shadows of evening fall and the night engulfs the day let us have the confidence of Jesus who in the darkness saw the light. He was able at the last to pray to his Father in the words that every Hebrew learned in childhood and repeated at close of day, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit."

# The Master of the Centuries

The Master of the Centuries who can not be denied

There are a great many things we do not know about Jesus Christ. For one thing we do not know what he looked like physically when He lived in Palestine. In our Church School papers and cards we have portrayed for us an Anglo-Saxon Christ. In China Christ is Chinese; in Africa he is a Negro Christ and rightly so. But he must really have possessed Hebrew features and that is all to the good.

We do not know anything about the years between twelve and thirty. John Greenham and others have written very beautifully about those silent years but it is of necessity only fiction that they have given us. As we know that he grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Our Protestant Faith centres in Jesus Christ. The basis of our faith is established in Him. There are some things we do not know about him but there are many things we do know.

We know that Jesus Christ lived in this world. There have been those who have dared to express the view that he never existed as a person. In their words the story of his life was constructed, the creative portraits of genius Jesus was no myth. There is history written outside Biblical sources such as one finds in the history of Josephus to validate and prove conclusively that a man named Jesus of Nazareth lived and that he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. A character really has to live before he can up it time into two parts, as that went before him and all that came after him. B.C. and A.D. These letters do mean something big. Frankly I believe I could stand before a judge and jury and prove to the satisfaction of all that Jesus Christ lived in this world.

I know that Jesus Christ is the one teacher in all the world who is completely authentic and satisfying. We live in a day of specialisation. To be a success today you have to go off into some corner and give yourself to one segment of life. Every form of work is becoming a specialty. How then can one live in a world that says "You do this one thing"? My answer is "By sitting down at the feet of the Divine Teacher. Only there does life take on its height, depth and breadth. In Jesus Christ I see a man who really lived, who lived the fourfold life. From him alone can you and I learn how to live as God would have us live.

Has your religion become a matter of formality? If so I would have you ask as did the Greeks long ago when they came to Philip saying "But we would see Jesus." Christianity is not a creed it is Christ. Be sure you see him.

This teacher never travelled outside Palestine. He never wrote except on the sand yet he has inspired Tennyson, Browning, Milton, Bunyan and all the great authors of the world. He never

*to new man; new - new*

built a school yet he has influenced the thinking of educators down through the centuries to know that the truth alone makes men free. He never erected a hospital yet his compassionate spirit and healing touch have made it imperative for his followers to do the works of mercy. He never struck a nail at slavery yet he completely undermined it for he taught that all men are brothers and there is one Father of all. He never took a brush and painted on canvas, yet set a statue. Despite this he has been the motivating inspiration behind a creative art. Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Rubens, and all the other great artists learned to see and understand life because they came to know Him. Have you learned from him the art of living? If so then big things have become small and small things big. A new proportion is yours.

He lived, he taught, and he revealed to men and women and to children the nature of God. It is because of Jesus Christ that we know what God is like. It is the endless love of God I see when I look at the Cross of Calvary. I am charged to believe that God is like that. He too gives his all. In Jesus did God give his all. He that hath seen me, said Jesus, hath seen the Father. He asks you to do something big, to die's yourself and take up your cross and follow him. If you come to know Jesus you will never point the finger of scorn at any person in the world for you will know that God loves all people.

I know that Christ can do great things for you. He took a publican tax collector and made him honest and dependable. He turned the sons of thunder James and John into tender, lovable personalities. He took a puffed fisherman and made him into a rock like character. If Christ is given a chance to live with you he will make you into the person you aim to be. He will give you a sense of dignity and of belonging to a Church and Kingdom spiritual and eternal. He will make you see life in its larger proportions. Yes you will become less quick to judge and more kindly in your appraisals. He will make you restless until you have given of your very self. He will drive you on. He will open your eyes, the dead eyes of the soul, until you see that God's children are to be fed in India, in Korea, and everywhere, not just physical food but big brotherly ideas and concepts of life.

Christ will give you hope, hope to believe that beyond the cross of suffering in our world is a new life which must be realized. I believe in Christ. He is the answer to the world's deepest need. Let us lift him up in our lives and deeds in our homes and churches. If you commit your life to his Kingdom you will respect every life. The color line will disappear. Yes you will be literally color blind. You will never be satisfied until every child of God is fed and clothed and knows the love of Christ as you do yourself. If you really come to know Christ you will know more and more too, that he gave his life to lift men and women into a world of brotherhood and peace.

You can find peace through sacrifice. What is this Christ costing you? What offering do you make so that his way of life might be carried out to all mankind? "Freedom is not free." Christianity is not without a cross. How much support have you given the Christian Church? If Christianity is to live it must find continuous expression in the lives of people. But remember, it is a cross-centred way of life. Are you willing to make the venture with new earnestness tonight, knowing that it may take you out beyond old-time comforts—yes even into dangerous living? Let me read you some lines from the closing paragraph of Charles Jefferson's book, *The Character of Jesus*:

He had eyes which looked along extended lines running into eternity; he had sympathies wide enough to cover humanity to its outermost edge. He pushed every good trait of human character to its utmost limit; and to it is impossible to go beyond him. We can never outgrow him. He will be always ahead of us. He is the ideal of the heart. He is the goal of humanity. It is this completeness of his character which accounts not only for his beauty but for his perennial and increasing power.

There is one hymn that strikes a responsive chord in the heart of every McMaster graduate. I learned it while attending Brandon College. It is called The McMaster Hymn and was written by Principal D. A. McGregor. I can think of no better way to close this meditation tonight than by quoting from this hymn, for it speaks of the One who is altogether lovely:

Fairer than the sunlight,  
Unto eyes that weep,  
Amid fear and darkness,  
Till the morning break,  
Fairer than the day-dawn,  
Hills and dales arising,  
When its tide of glory  
Wakes the tide of song.

Jesus! all perfections  
Rise and end in Thee  
Brightness of God's glory  
Thou eternally  
Favour'd beyond measure  
Thy Thy face who see;  
May we, gracious Saviour,  
Share this ecstasy.

He is "the Master of the Centuries" who cannot be denied!



## Summer in the Soul

*"His presence is to men like summer in the soul."*

H. V. Morton in his own inimitable style tells in one of his books how the head of Cassius at the setting of the sun "turns first to blood red then to gold and finally to shimmering silver." For him the lake was sacred because at the setting of the sun he had seen something of the wistful beauty and unutterable grandeur of the Divine Artist. I never knew how Morton felt until one beautiful tranquil August afternoon I stood for the first time beside Lake Louise.

Today as I look out on life I discover that many have not such an interpretation. Some have a pessimistic outlook. To them man is a mere accident. Man is a chance formation of atoms. Man is a disease on the surface of the globe.

Friends, let me put it bluntly. If the source of creation be without a mind and design, what else but irrationality and madness can you expect in the created? For one cannot look upon the bewildering exactitude and precision and order in Nature and believe that it came by a chance bouncing together of atoms. Renan's penetrating question might well be asked the materialist: "Have you earned the right to disbelieve in Christ and?"

The second interpretation of life which one meets is ruthless. It states that life is determined by blind will. Man is not free. He is a cog in a machine and there is nothing he can do but go with the machine. Life is to be endured. Why worry? You can do nothing. The bullet has your number on it or it has not. Fatalism is far more prevalent than some of us would like to admit. Fatalism in religious attire was seen in the old theory of predestination. You were born to be elect or you were born to be damned and there was nothing you could do about it. But we are not merely inking in a pencil sketch. We are designers. We are like God in that we are creators too, but in a lesser way. Fatalism leaves no room for choices, decisions, personal initiative or freedom. It robs man of his birthright and makes him a creature of instinct.

The third interpretation of life is hopelessly optimistic. I refer to humanism. It is the old escalator philosophy that man is on the road upwards. We have lived through a decade when frequently the escalator has gone into reverse. We have reached the nemesis of this kind of stupid thinking. No thinking man any longer wishes to put man on the throne where God ought to be. This age of strife with its ruthless wars, its savagery, its bestiality has brought man to feel the need of a Saviour.

The Roman Empire degenerated because it lost its moral and spiritual fibre. It ceased to be interested in anything other than physical satisfactions and material comforts. If this is a law-

abiding universe—and I believe it is—we cannot escape if we neglect travelling the road to life.

The fourth interpretation of life is realistic. It is Christian. It accepts man as a creature of dust plus that intangible something which the Bible calls the breath of life. This, other than the physical, is what gives dignity and divinity to man. Julian Huxley, speaking for scientists in general, said a few years ago: "We know nothing about the origins of life. Who knows when if ever matter originated or how there came that jump from the inorganic to the organic?" All we can do is to look at life deeply and in faith accept that in the beginning God created.

For those of us who hold to a Christian philosophy of life, man and God, life is an adventure. Undergirded by the Divine power and strengthened by a comprehensive faith, we face the future in the spirit of Christ. God is at work in the world and in the lives of men. May His Holy Spirit move us all to do that which is within the realm of possibility for us.

Some of you may be a bit overwhelmed by the progress of viciousness and cruelty in the world. Let us remember that what our forebears called Providence is a real factor in life. Some people still speak of their guardian angel. Explain it however you will, there is a spirit that helps us to do what is right. The atheistic, fatalistic and humanitarian philosophies of life are inadequate to meet the real needs of our life. These satisfy not, nor do they bring summer to the soul. It is only as we are undergirded by a spiritual interpretation that life becomes worth the living. Then, and then only, are "life, death and the vast forever" one grand, sweet song."

I vividly recall a band concert given by the Canadian Legion at the Provincial sanatorium in Manitoba. It was a beautiful Sunday evening in late August. The band played on the lawn in front of the Infirmary, and the local public address system carried the concert to all the pavilions. It was a secular program throughout with songs, duets and instrumental numbers interspersed. I can see the sun as it began to set across the valley just behind the five hundred maple trees that I had helped plant to the north of our house, when I was a lad of four.

Then softly and reverently the band played, "Abide With Me," and Olga Irwin stood before the microphone and sang those immortal words. Wilfred Davidson joined her in the second verse.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see—  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!

When they came to the last verse the patients all joined in, not because they were requested to do so, but because they were unable to remain silent. Together they sang in the Infirmary, Gordon Cottage, the pavilions and the main building.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes,  
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies,  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee  
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me

Wisecracking will not heal our wounds or drive our fears away, nor will men with little philosophies and interpretations, who know all things, and who yet know nothing. In moments when 'this world's empty glory is costing us too dear,' we reach out and know from experience that the eternal "God is our refuge and strength," and that "underneath and around us are the everlasting arms."

For the valiant of earth who have fought a good fight and kept the faith He has made provision, we believe, in a brighter and better kingdom than can be experienced here. Only those who have a sense of coming out on the side of light here and hereafter can build into our present structure the things which will remain because they are of eternal value. When one has a faith that is big, an understanding that is founded on sound experience, and a spirit and mind that are under the dominance of Christ, then one is secure, and able to live and speak for the Kingdom of God. Peace on earth and justice everywhere can be realized.

We need something of the wholesome and unbounded faith which Charles Kingsley knew so well, and to which he gave expression in these words:

And hastes, Lord, that perfect day  
When pain and death shall cease,  
And Thy just rule shall fill the earth  
With health and light and peace

When ever blue the sky shall gleam,  
And ever green the sod,  
And man's rude work deface no more  
The Paradise of God

## Show Us Anew on Calvary

*In the light that falls from the Cross we are seen for what we are*

Tonight I speak with you concerning Rome's greatest criminal — a man who, although he was sinless and had committed no crime, had the sentence of death passed on him and who died upon a Roman cross of shame. His trial, lasting at various times longer than for fraudulency it has a record. It is the most dramatic trial of the ages, and holds us enthralled in its grip. All the forces of good and evil met in the trial and death of Christ. From the moment of his arrest until he breathed his last word on the Cross, thousands of feeling and emotion ran so high that one can scarcely breathe.

His friends were in a frenzy of fear over his arrest and trial, and his enemies exultant over his inevitable crucifixion. I can see it all very vividly: the arrest in Gethsemane, Annas the Sanhedrin and Pilate the march to Calvary, the howling mob, the Roman soldiers, his mother and John. I can see a three crosses as he ascended against the sky. On the cross to the right an impudent brigand, but as steel and courage. As he has lived, so he died. On the cross to the left a man hangs there awaiting the end of this mortal life. He hears the man in the central cross pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Then, looking with a new understanding, in Jesus he prays, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom."

Stand beneath the Cross tonight and let it judge you. In the light that falls from Calvary's star, by there is no hiding place. The Cross tears off the mask. It makes impossible any pretense. Just as one is permitted to take a garment away from the artificial light of the street, the light of the sun to see it in its true colors, so in the light that falls from the Cross we are seen for what we are.

James E. Vance wrote: "Christianity is rugged with its hatred of harm and hypocrisy and artificialities, with its stern demand for simplicity and sincerity and genuineness."

It is a humiliating cross. Yes, it is embarrassing. It speaks of One who gave so much and was so little. All our giving seems so trivial and unimportant when we place it beneath the gift divine. For as we pause beneath the shadow of the tree of Calvary we surely know that

"Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Stand beneath this Cross until you are cleansed, forgiven, and made to see that God moves in a mysterious way. His wonders to perform. Paul stood beneath it until he was able to write

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form

of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

With love and joy, both high and low, let Him, and give Him a name above all other names: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

When I survey the wonder of a Cross on which the Prince of glory died, I am amazed, humbled and made to see that Christ was truer than death. It is an empty cross we have for he triumphed over all his foes.

In St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon there is a cross. Every student who enters for a course in Theology surveys it every time he enters the chapel. It is especially the thought of those in our college here and elsewhere that I am saying man really sees the Cross and commits himself to it to live in the spirit of it he will never fade; a faithful man remain Christ's true and faithful servant to the end.

We all need more power to be shown anew at Calvary the deeper meanings of Christ's act. I was deeply moved by an incident in the church where it was my privilege to serve. A number of children from a nearby school came over to borrow hymn books for use at their Remembrance Day Service. A Grade Six boy stood in the back gallery and looked towards the American War hymns. Suddenly he called out with great enthusiasm, "See! This church is a cross!" Well, people seeing your self-forgetfulness at the self-sufficiency say,

This man has been with Jesus. It is the supreme mission of those who love and serve him to placard before the eyes of all the life of One who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

For several years we spent our vacation month at Quilicum Beach on Vancouver Is. and. One evening, after we had gone out salmon fishing there suddenly came up a "calumet" the Indian name for a miniature hurricane. In a few minutes the waves were tossing our little boat around. The young old whom we were with opened up the motor. The waves began to pass over a little but soon we were docked and happy to be back in our cottage. Later that night a little seven year old boy who had accompanied us on our fishing exploit, called me into the bedroom and inquired "Is the sea still angry?" Then he said, "You know Daddy, when I saw those waves starting to wash over a little into the boat I got pretty frightened. Then I reached over and took your hand, and then you looked down and smiled. I knew then that everything was all right. That faith of a little old man his father, we all need deeply in a world that is swept by suspicion and fear."

Dr. Willard Brewster has had long thoughts about the Cross, which enabled him to write:

Sometimes it seems as though we were standing with the gaping crowds along the way, sometimes cheering Him on with a

song, once in a while shedding a tear when moved by a particularly tender sermon, throwing His our loose change when we have spent all our big money on little things, living carefully 'in the suburbs of the City of God, not too far in where the mob and dust are.'

And then Dr. Brewster continues, "There stands the Eternal Cross, the classic symbol of moral courage, of redeeming pity, and of burden-bearing friendship."

Let us stand reverently beneath the Supreme Cross until we are enointed with the true knowledge of God's love. And it is my prayer for each and every one of you, that you will rest this night knowing that there is One who loves us enough to give his all. You can never doubt that after you have seen him.

In one of Browning's well-known poems a bishop engaged in conversation with a skeptic asks this question:

What thank ye of Christ, friend?  
When all's done and said,  
Like you this Christianity or not?  
It may be false, but will you wish it true?  
Has it your vote to be so if it can?

It is never false, and it is ever true. He has our vote, and we sign the ballot with the mark of the Cross.

# The Holy Catholic Church

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

I never sneer at another man's faith. I believe that every man is sincere in what he believes. Therefore I trust I shall not be found guilty of knocking what another holds precious. Jeering at those who do not think as we do never does any good and it generally does a great deal of harm.

Not so I be found guilty of mocking reverence. I am profoundly impressed by others' deep devotion to a Church which I can never make mine. I believe that many who never can and never will become Protestants are Christians. In simple faith they take to heart Jesus Christ as I do. In spite of all that is good outside Protestantism I can never become a devotee for I do not believe that any one Church has the keys. I believe there is good and bad in all churches and that a lot of us are most imperfect and need the forgiveness and help of God.

What then generally speaking is the Protestant position? A Protestant is a worshiper. He is for witnessing to the truth. He is not a priest of things as they are but rather a prophet of things as they ought to be. Luther's Articles were not so much a condemnation of the Church as they lay as they were an affirmation of the faith and for as it was revealed by Jesus Christ.

A Protestant is one who believes in the right of the individual to find God for himself. A Protestant believes that he can approach God alone for our God is as Terrence puts it closer than breathing nearer than hands and feet. Our God may be found in the Church but also beyond it. Who has not been touched by the Divine in great solitude or great music in the world of Nature and in the honest unselfish work of those who above all else desire to do the best and truest work of God?

A Protestant is one who believes the Bible to be the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. In this Book I can discover what is required of me. To be justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with my God. In this Book I have the life and teachings of Jesus Christ revealed to me and I hear the Lord and Master of us all say. Follow me. I hear him say. I am the way, the truth and the life."

When I read this Book I discover that upon men like Peter the Church is built. Look at Peter impetuous, irascible, mercurial in temperament, volatile in disposition, a man whom Christ had to rebuke and yet who though imperfect possessed great spiritual insights. Upon imperfect men like Peter Jesus Christ still depends to build his Church. From this Book I see that Christianity began with a few disciples keeping company with Jesus. They recited no creeds (at least the New Testament does so indicate) enforced no sacraments, belonged to no formal organizations. And when

you open your Bible remember that it is not a textbook on science philosophy or history. It is a guide-book on life and conduct, and in it are the words of eternal life.

A Protestant too, is one who believes in the infinite worth of every life. Each man, woman and child is an end in himself or herself and not a means to an end. Without Protestantism to propagate the truth about man, democracy would be short-lived. The nations that are predominantly Protestant remain democracies. The way of life that we support and champion did not begin with Luther. It began with Jesus Christ. It was Christ who taught the infinite worth of every life in the eyes of God. The Good Shepherd goes out in search of the lost sheep. God is like that for He loves each of us as if we were the only child He has. Let us remember that our Church, because it is democratic in its organization, has a great responsibility in this day.

We Protestants belong in the Holy Catholic Church. I am a Catholic for Catholic comes from the Latin word "Catholicus" meaning general or universal. And holy means pure, unadulterated, without blemish. Actually, holy means "whole" and the Church in its original setting was a fellowship. So I belong to the Holy Catholic Church which is a universal, all-inclusive, an embracing fellowship. The centre of this great catholic or universal Church is God. The centre is located in no earthly city but in God our Father. It is not for me or for any man on earth to say who are members of the Church of Christ. In his great Church many who think they are first are last, and the last are first.

I like this poem whose source is unknown.

In the castle of my soul, there is a little pattern gate  
Where, when I enter, I am in the presence of God.  
In a moment, in a turning of a thought,  
I am where God is.  
When I meet God there all life gains a new meaning,  
Small things become great and great things small.  
Lowly and despised things are shot through with glory.

My troubles seem but the pebbles on the road,  
My joys seem like the everlasting hills.  
All my fever is gone in the great peace of God.  
And I pass through the door from Time into Eternity.

The God we worship lives in an eternal temple not made with hands. Whenever we turn to him we find sanctuary even as Jesus did. God's word is one for he is one. Let there be large dimensions to your soul. And always remember that no church on earth can rule you out if, with all your heart, you truly seek him and desire to be his true disciple.

Rise up, O men of God!  
Have done with lesser things.



## *The Sacred Table*

*'Come to this Sacred Table not because you must but because you may'*

The Passover was a feast of primary and paramount significance and value to every devout Jew. For him it celebrated the birth of a nation and enshrined the story of the deliverance of the Hebrew people from slavery and servitude in Egypt. It reminded the Jews that God had taken up their cause and only by a continual renewal of the vow of allegiance to God could they hope to succeed in days to come.

Hebrew children from infancy were trained to know the law and the meaning of the Passover. For them the Feast of Passover commemorated the victory of the Hebrew over Pharaoh. Without hesitation they could answer as to the deeper meanings of the feast telling also how God smote the Egyptians and set Israel free.

As Christians we too must be able to answer for the faith that is ours. We must be in that secure position which allows us to know the truth that keeps men free. I purpose tonight to give you the basis of faith which we hold in regard to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

We Protestants do not believe that any word of ours or any miracle turns the bread and wine on the Lord's Table into the actual blood and body of Christ. This materialistic conception is distasteful to thoughtful people for the simple reason that it can never be true. Look at the origin of the Sacrament. Christ was in the Upper Room with his disciples. They had just concluded the Passover meal together. Knowing that he was soon to be betrayed and crucified, he took the bread left over from the meal and breaking it said, "This is my body which is broken for you." In like manner also he took the cup in his hands, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood."

Drink ye all of it." He was standing there in person. It was before the Cross and resurrection experiences. There could not have been two Christs—one in the bread and wine and another in the person speaking.

We must ever remember that the Protestant Communion is a spiritual one. We do not accept the materialistic doctrine of the bread and wine being made by a miracle into the actual body and blood of Christ. We do believe in the Divine Presence in all of the service of Communion. The Sacrament was never meant to be elaborate or complex. It is so simple that a child can understand.

What then is this Sacrament? The Lord's Supper is an act or rite of commemoration. Jesus was leaving his disciples and he wished to be remembered so he said to them on that night in which he was betrayed, "This do in remembrance of me." Every time we come to this Communion Table we so remember him and he is spiritually present.

Paul in a letter to young Timothy, writes, "Remember Jesus Christ." We do that at every Communion Service. We remember that he was born in this world, worked in a carpenter's shop in this world, went out on his great mission of love in this world, suffered in this world, instituted the Sacrament in this world, died upon a cross in this world, and rose triumphant over death in this world. Every time we partake of his Sacrament we see Christ again with his disciples and sense the Divine Presence in our souls. There is hope for the individual who remembers, and for the nation that never forgets Christ.

'The Protestant Reformation' writes Harold E. Fey "accomplished nothing so important as the rediscovery of Jesus Christ. It is commonly recognized that this occurred when Luther opened the Bible to the people. That is true but not the whole truth. Zwingle's rediscovery of the Lord's Supper in its New Testament simplicity was also an important step in this direction. The remembrance of Christ was reborn."

In memory of the Saviour's love,  
We keep the sacred feast

The Sacrament is a covenant. When Jesus stood before that first Communion Table in the presence of his followers, he lifted the cup that symbolized his vicarious love and sacrifice. Jeromiah had spoken of God's covenant with his people, and had intimated that better days would come:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people:

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

So we see that in the solemn hour before the Cross he made a new covenant with them. It was a covenant sealed as it were, in his blood.

The word "sacrament" comes from the Latin "sacramentum" which was an oath a Roman officer took before Caesar. These officers pledged their aid. Willing were they to fight and if need be, to die for Caesar. So we take the "sacramentum", and our allegiance is to no earthly priest or king but to Christ, the only head of the Church.

As we come to partake of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, let us never forget the price paid down through the centuries by those who fought a good fight and kept the faith. They went down into the catacombs. Let us never forget the Covenanters, who signed the covenant of unity to Christ with their own blood, and then went out into the guns and with a sentinel on either hill, broke the bread and lifted the cup in remembrance of him.

If we keep our pledge God will honor his part of the covenant. He will never fail us nor forsake us. Christ will ever be with us, for did he not say "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The Lord's Supper symbolizes life in its fulness yet to be realized. As often as ye eat this bread and drink this wine ye do show the Lord's death till he come wrote St. Paul. We belong to a Church that will last for ever and ever. We partake of this Holy Communion in anticipation of that greater world when sin and death shall be no more. We continue this feast believing that his kingdom will yet come in fulness. God lives and Christ triumphs. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. So until the kingdom comes we carry on. Our eyes are not on the past only, for our faith in the better world yet to be realized is real.

At this Table of our Lord the floor is level. We are all equal. Here we gain strength and touch the source of power. We feed upon the bread of life and are nourished at the fountain of life. We partake of the Sacrament in anticipation of the triumph of our God in Jesus Christ.

I can think of no better words in which to close this talk on the deeper meaning of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, than those found in a beautiful order of service included in the Minister's Service Book by James Dalton Morrison.

Come to this sacred table, not because you must, but because you may; come not to boast that you are righteous, but that you sincerely love our Lord Jesus Christ, and desire to be his true disciples; come not because you are strong, but because you are weak; not because you have any claim on heaven's rewards, but because in your frailty and sin you stand in constant need of heaven's mercy and help; come not to express an opinion, but to seek a Presence and pray for a Spirit.

## ***A Book of Remembrance***

*"And a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name."*

This is Remembrance Day and there is one thought uppermost in all our minds. At eleven o'clock yesterday morning I stood by the Cenotaph in downtown Saskatoon with the group of citizens who had gathered once again to pay tribute to the memory of gallant acts from two wars. To see the men in the various services -- and especially to see the young boys, the cadets -- made me ponder over the preciousness of human life.

I was standing near the boys and girls who had been chosen by their schools to place wreaths of remembrance on the Cenotaph. They were honoring the young people from their schools who in an earlier day than theirs had given their lives for King and Country. I could not but feel that if the warriors of yesteryears asked again that scene at the Cenotaph, perhaps the thought of being remembered by those who now fill their places in their own schools would be the most thrilling experience of all.

In thinking of what I might say on the evening of this Remembrance Sunday, my mind fastened on the words written long ago by the prophet Malachi:

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

We know little about the prophet Malachi. Like a meteor he flashed across a dark sky, leaving no trace behind except for a few pages of forthright prophecy in the four short chapters of the last book of the Old Testament. He reminded his generation of their necessity to bring in tithes and offerings, for it was his conviction that God would bless his people when they did this. He had scathing words for those who brought second best gifts to the altar.

Malachi knew that the preponderance of the people no longer revered and loved God, but he also knew that there were those who feared God and thought upon his name. So touched was he with this inner circle that one of loyalty among his people, that he wrote in glowing terms of them, saying: "And a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord and thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

I like that expression -- "A Book of Remembrance." It is very familiar to me, for in the church of which I am the minister we have a Book of Remembrance. It is part of a dual memorial that has been dedicated to the memory of those who went forth to the Second World War. On a bronze plaque on the wall are the names of those who gave their lives, and beneath the plaque there is an oak cabinet that was made by one of the most outstanding wood-

craftsmen in Canada. In this beautiful and dignified cabinet there rests under glass the Book of Remembrance. In it are inscribed in the lettering of a skilful hand the names of the men and women who went out from the congregation. The names of those who came not back are lettered in gold and it is one name in every sixteen. The names of all the others are there too—those who, "daring to die, survived."

Every Sunday throughout the year, a page is turned before the morning service and a light within the cabinet shines upon the page and illumines the plaque above. I pass by this shining Book of Remembrance every time I enter my pulpit and I always feel that I am compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. And when I speak of the Book of Remembrance I am not unmindful of the order and larger plaque to the left of the pulpit on which are the names of the men who in an earlier day went out to an earlier war and whose memories too are enshrined in our hearts. They too counted their lives of lesser consequence than the cause they served.

The Persians had their Book of Remembrance. In the sixth chapter of Esther we find that they inscribed in it the names of those who served well the king together with a notation of their meritorious deeds. John also, on the island of Patmos, eked out his existence by working as a quarry slave and sleeping at night in a convict hut dreamed of that day when those who are worthy will be rewarded for their loyalty to Jesus Christ. They, he writes, which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. No wonder then that the words of Malachi strike a chord in the hearts of the faithful.

Everyone has a book of remembrance. We are all writing day by day into our own book of memory. It is well so to live that we can pray "Eternal God take my hands and lead me back through all my yesterdays. Thy goodness has been unfailing and thy love beyond my deserving. In your book of remembrance what have you written? And what with God's help will you write in the days and years to come. We make our home: recall and write our books of remembrance and rightly so. But God who knows every life judges and evaluates from true knowledge."

There is a story of a French soldier who suffered from amnesia after the First World War. He was in hospital and when they asked him who he was all he could reply was "I don't know who I am." It was decided to run his picture in several large newspapers in the hope that his family might recognize him as their own. His face was disfigured from wounds and it was thought that the likeness would not be very apparent. In spite of this, three families claimed him.

Under hospital escort he was taken to the first village and then on to the second. In each he was allowed to walk around by himself. But it was not home. Finally when he reached the third

village, 'a sudden light of recognition came into his eyes, he walked unerringly down a side street, in through a tidy gate, and up the steps of his father's home. Like the prodigal son, he had come to himself.' The old familiar surroundings had restored his mind. Once again, he knew who he was and where he belonged.'

That is something—to know who you are and where you belong! Every Remembrance Day, as we stand beneath the crosses of lands near and far away, we see above and beyond all, the Supreme Cross. We are made aware of the great lengths to which love will go. We come to ourselves and we recognize who we are and where we belong.

And a Book of Remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.

## Count Your Blessings

"And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

I once asked Dr. Dufour, the late editor of the Winnipeg Free Press, why the newspapers continued to play up the despicable irrational deeds of men and to minimize the sane and lovely expressions of the human spirit. His reply was: "The Press is not the Church. The Press gives people the news they want, not what they need. What they need I write in my editorials."

But I thought to myself: The average person does not read the editorials very regularly or very thoroughly. He has become trained to looking on the front pages for the important news and there he sees all the things that are wrong with the world.

Our age is a negative one. We know what is wrong with everything and everybody. We are continually hearing of the ills of the world. Every man has his own opinion of what is wrong but few have anything positive to say. We need to think affirmatively about what is right in the world. There is much that is hopeful and bright, and much to give courage in an age of bewilderment.

Long years ago a man wrote a poem in which he affirmed what was good:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me  
bless his holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:  
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases,  
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee  
with loving kindness and tender mercies.

This glorious third Psalm tells us that the Lord is merciful and gracious, that he hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

One reason we can be thankful and count our blessings this Sunday evening is that we have a God who is worthy of our love. We have a God worth serving. This God has fashioned the world in wisdom. He has flung the stars across the sky. He has made us in his image, and when we failed as a race he gave us Jesus Christ to dwell with us. In Jesus we have seen the expression of the nature and will of God.

Buddha said: "Hide thyself." Mohammed's god Allah demanded: "Assert yourself." But the God we know says: "Love me and serve your fellowmen in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Will you stoop to conquer? Will you win through love? Will you walk with the Divine Companion all your days? Will you pray in the words of the hymn:

O for a closer walk with God,  
A calm and heavenly frame,  
A light to shine upon the road  
That leads me to the Lamb!

The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
And worship only Thee

Not only have we a God worth serving, but we have also a story worth telling through a lifetime. This is a day of indoctrination. Every man, woman, and child has something to say, and is saying it. We are all preachers of divine truth if we live aright, for it is not what we say but how we live that speaks most convincingly. Jesus Christ went about living so magnificently that others wished to become like him. Above all philosophies of men, I hear the Son of God and of Man saying to us, as he said to those before us, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Every gift you give to the Church, and every good word you speak for Jesus Christ, is helping to win the victory over the base and ugly and unbrotherly in the world. We have the great news of a God who loves enough to seek and save, a God who never will have rest until all his children are at peace. Tonight I would ask you to remember that

There's a wideness in God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea,  
There's a kindness in His justice  
Which is more than liberty

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measures of man's mind,  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind

And then too, we have a religion worth enjoying. Christianity is not sombre and drab. It is a way of light and joy. It is full of rejoicing and singing. In the Preface to the United Church Hymnary we read, "The Church has come singing down through the ages," her people generation after generation have lifted up their hearts and voices in adoring praise. Even as the Master went out to the hill of Calvary, he retained the true radiance of soul.

Many times on Sunday evenings I find myself thinking of my Aunt Jean Rea. She was so Scottish in her speaking that I could not always understand her. As a young lad I was deeply attracted to her. Aunt Jean had one strange custom: she smoked a clay pipe. And she always sang at her work. One of the happiest recollections I have as a young boy, is that of Sunday evenings when the clan would gather. We always concluded the evening with a good sing-song around the organ. We sang hymns for what is there better to sing on a Sunday evening? My Aunt Jean would invariably ask that we close the sing-song with her favorite hymn, and we always did. I know that is why I like it so well now.



When we walk with the Lord  
In the light of his word,  
What a glory he sheds on the way,  
When we do his good will  
He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey

Trust and obey,  
For there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus,  
But to trust and obey

Just think of all you have tonight a God worth serving, a gospel worth proclaiming and a religion worth enjoying. And besides these you have a Church worth sustaining. Undergirding all our lives is the Church. We are in the great Church of Christ - the church of freedom, peace, truth and love, that will never pass away. We walk in the great procession of the lowly in heart and humble in soul.

Will you just stop and think what you owe to the Church. It received you into its fellowship the day you were baptized, and it will be with you to the journey's end. True the Church is not perfect. It is made up of imperfect people like you and me, but it does something no other organization or institution in all the world does. It takes men and women out to every part of the world to tell the great story of Jesus and his love.

I love the Church. I owe everything to it and it means everything to me. That is why I like to hear a congregation sing at the evening service.

Father in high heaven dwelling,  
May our evening song be telling  
Of Thy mercy large and free  
Through the day Thy love has fed us,  
Through the day Thy care has led us,  
With divinest charity

So lift up your heart this Sunday evening. God has blessed you richly and beyond your deserving. You have friends you know are true. You have a God you can love, a story you can tell, a religion that can make you sing and a church you can sustain.

Count your blessings, name them one by one  
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done

## *A Calm Centre for Life*

*Work hard, be courteous and put your trust in God*

In a recent book *The Art of Real Happiness* by Norman Vincent Peale D.D. and Smiley Blanton M.D. there are chapters and paragraphs that kindle the imagination and set the mind to work. These co-authors in the chapter entitled *How to Stay Healthy Under Pressure*, illustrate one point of view by reference to a certain Pullman conductor. Through circumstances beyond his control an old fashioned twelve section sleeper was substituted one night for the roomette car on his train. The indignation of the passengers placed him in a difficult position but he did his best to create good will as he patiently provided them with the available accommodation.

Later, one of the passengers, who evidently had an understanding of life, said to the conductor,

"You've had quite an evening, haven't you? They said some pretty rough things to you. But you don't seem upset by it. What is your secret for keeping so calm?"

"It's this," he answered. "I do the best I can and let it go at that." The man who trained me for this work gave me three rules. First he said, work hard, second be courteous, third and biggest, put your trust in God. And with His help I've been able to remain calm in even the hardest situations."

If you and I are to have a calm centre of living in a world of strife we must follow these same three rules. Disobey them and we fail, obey them and we will stand no matter what the winds blow up or how violent the storm.

The first rule is "Work hard." The man for whom I feel sorry is not the man who is working too hard, but rather the one who is not working hard enough to get a thrill out of his endeavours. There are interior satisfactions and rewards that come from work well done, that can be gained in no other way. This is a truth that only the man who has earned his daily bread through an honest contribution to the world about him, has real peace of mind. Christ never slacked. He worked. Said He, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

All the piety in the world will never make up for laziness. Last fall Dr. Donald Soper, of Kingsway Hall, London, England, addressed a large Young People's meeting in our city. He had many things of a pertinent nature to say that captivated his listeners. He told them that he had never been late for an appointment or meeting, and that he had always worked hard at everything he set out to do. He said, "I have my weaknesses and failings. There is one thing, however, of which I can boast—I am not lazy. I have worked hard

for Christ's Kingdom. As he made that simple assertion, a glow of respect and a stimulation for the speaker swept through that great mass meeting of young people.

"Can you make such a statement about yourself? Can you say you have no backbone? Have you tried to do your best with the equipment God gave you? It is a great thing to realize in your own heart that you have given the best you have for Christ. It makes you big, no matter what weather is in the air. If we see our task in this world as important one, we will put everything into it. If we believe that that hand is in it, like a Hand Industry, we will devote our energies to its extension.

The second novel by a Christian writer, naturally follows the first rule of "Write hard." It draws the attention of the readers of *Christianity Today*. The author is said to be a man of fact. In my reading, when I was young, I was struck and fascinated by books written by Americans whose religious faith was not at all formal. It struck us then as a new kind of being, strong and straightforward and almost free. The author was positive, he felt a kind of assurance of something right, the person who was positive was not nervous. It was when we were the most impressionable. This also meant suggested that a person is positive when he is confident. Living is a far wider world than that is a way. There are a great many men and women, and boys and girls who do things but not enough when things are done well.

Jesus said, "I must work, and be also called the other workers, the figs and the figs, the seasons, the seasons, the seasons. All his works were touched by the artist's hand. When we were young that there was a spirit in which we did our work and of importance." Getting things done and doing it better, that getting things done in a spirit of a person and a person who has a little more of Christianity about it. It is a person who is doing things in a man way.

A friend of mine many years ago wrote to me of a man who had greatly interested him in his work. My friend was reared in one of the southern States. His life's philosophy was shaped in his father's hands by this man who he found that one could get into heaven in the pretense of being a gentleman. When I was young, I together with that strange philosophy I still believe that it does contain a point of interest. I believe that the conditions and terms of entrance to God's world have been more demanding than any of friend would have me think. The man who he sees and takes up his cross and follows Christ's way of entrance. However being a perfect gentleman should not hinder or slow one out, and I do think that the hunger of heaven and our might open just as the more easy to the man who has been kind in a life's relations. If you are captivated by the spirit of the greatest gentleman of all, you will love and think and give like he did.

There is some good theology in the story of the little daughter of the radio announcer who in her Grace before dinner one day

said, "This food comes to you through the courtesy of Almighty God." Courtesy and Providence do go together. God gives, but He gives so quietly and unostentatiously that we can miss altogether the Giver of every gift, even life itself.

Work hard, be courteous, and finally, "Put your trust in God." Only those remain calm in a day like this who put their trust in a power greater than that of man. In a great historic chapter of the New Testament, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews Moses, among others, is evaluated aright. Of Moses it is written there: "He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." Someone has said, "Whatever a man leans on, that is his God." Have you leaned on wealth that perishes or on popularity that may be short-lived? Have you put your trust in your intellectual capacity to out-think and out-plan your closest rivals? Or have you, like Moses, put your trust, not in man or in man's skilful designs, but in the invisible and eternal God?

There are many who still believe that we can out-manoeuvre and eclipse the dictatorship nations that know not our God. Your confidence and mine must rest on deep foundations of faith and trust. We must have a firm belief that this is a moral and just universe and that no one can for very long continue to run against the divine purposes of God. In God alone is there security and peace. Isaiah, living in a time of tensions, was able to write,

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusteth in Thee."

So, if we would live successfully we must move on one day at a time, working hard for the highest. We must do good in the spirit of the Great Galilean. We must put our trust in the good God, who alone has the everlasting strength to undergird your life and mine.

## ***The True Portrait***

*'Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'*

This week I had my picture taken and have just been looking over the proofs. I suppose no one is ever quite satisfied that the best possible photograph of himself has yet been produced. Actually you will never have a better picture than the one you had taken when you were a baby. Get out the old family album tonight and see just how grand you were sitting there in the ornate high chair of the photographer.

As you looked over the old album of snapshots you will see yourself as you were in the days of innocent childhood. Here is one that was taken hurriedly just before Uncle John left for home. Here is one taken by the school teacher who had been given a new camera by a special friend at Christmas. Here is another of the family reunion. These are treasures, these of all the uncles and aunts and cousins taken by the windbreak just to the west of the house.

Take a look at yourself when you were sixteen, seventeen or even twenty. Remember how deliberately you made an appointment at the studio. Be honest. You really thought you were good looking, and you were. No question about that. Then when the proofs came you took them quietly up to your room and by yourself and looked at them. But in wonder, awe and praise.

Speaking of photographs brings us to the main thought of our chat This Sunday Evening. As I see it we all have our picture taken four times a life by four different photographers.

First of all there is the candid snapshot the world takes of us. Taking pictures on the street is now quite a business. They will take you even when you try to evade them. You can even make a face, but they hand you a card, and you know you are in the box. My dictionary defines 'candid' as 'honest unprejudiced unbiased.' As you and I walk through life candid shots are taken of us by everyone we meet. Snap judgments are passed. Yet how very little most of these folks really know about us. In spite of intuition, first impressions are often wrong. The first picture in the album is the candid shot the world takes of us.

There is also the time-exposure that our friends take of us. A time-exposure is precisely what it says, an exposure made over a long period of time. The candid picture need not be picked up. You need never turn in your card and your twenty-five cents. You need never see that picture but generally you are interested in what your friends think of you.

When Jesus was saving his friends he knew that under the pressure of events they might fall away for a time. He was also certain that eventually the time-exposure would hold them loyal.

Said he to them "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you friends." True when the dark hour came and he closed in on him his disciples followed a long way off. Judas even went out and hanged himself. The fearful time-exposure of friendship did its work and Judas could not live in a world of decent men knowing that he had sold Christ out. Then after the darkness came the dawn and these men when they saw him triumphant over the cross, went out and gave all they had for their everlasting friend. In the second place there is the time-exposure of our friends.

Then there is the picture we have of ourselves. I always feel sorry for the owner of the camera, for he so seldom gets into the picture himself. No one laughs very long at amateur photography before he gets one of those little gadgets attached to his camera enabling him to take his own picture along with the rest of the group. We are all interested in how we look. When you get a roll of snapshots what do you do first? To be perfectly honest you know you take a quick glance at yourself and the pictures are good or they are terrible, depending on how you look.

Some of us have a reasonable picture of ourselves. Some of us have a better one than is warranted. Some have a splendid picture of others but an unjust one of ourselves. Jesus tells of two men who went into the temple to pray. One prayed, "O Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." He had a lofty view of himself. The other man prayed, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." No touching up of that picture! He valued himself aright. What picture have you taken of yourself?

Finally, there is the picture God has of us. The world may take an unfair shot. Time-exposures may be spoiled by moving. The pictures we take of ourselves may be out of focus. There is one picture that is fair and unspoiled and in true focus. The good God whose children we are judges us aright. His is a true picture of the total person.

Lord Tennyson once asked the artist George Frederick Watts his idea of what a true portrait painter should be. The reply so impressed the poet that he wrote it into the beautiful lines which appeared in the poem "Elaine."

"As when a painter gazing on a face  
Divinely, through all hindrance, finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face  
The shape, and colour of a mind and life  
Lives for his children at its best."

That is what God sees in us—the shape and colour of a mind and life."

Long years ago Samuel went down to Bethlehem to choose a king from among the sons of Jesse. When Eliab was brought in Samuel said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." But the Lord said unto Samuel, "Look not on his countenance or on the

height of his stature, because I have refused him, for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

After the seven sons who were at home had passed before Samuel, he said to Jesse, "The Lord hath not chosen these." When Samuel inquired if there were any more sons in the family he was told that the youngest was keeping the sheep. David was brought before Samuel, and the man of God was deeply moved for the Lord said to him, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed David in the midst of his brethren. "Man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart."

There is a celebrated young Canadian pianist whom I know very well. He went to London and studied there for three years under great teachers. There was thunderous applause after the first concert he gave on his return to Canada. This is what he said afterwards: "I knew the audience liked my playing, but my eyes were on my old teacher who had worked so faithfully with me before I went to London. It was his appraisal. I wanted most of all to play acceptably for him and for his sake was my deep desire."

Even though the world applaud us, we may be failures in the eyes of God. Well might we pray:

A mighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, and desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of thy holy spirit, that we may perfectly love and worthily magnify thy holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Let us live our lives knowing that God alone reads aright, and in the blinding light of his purity we are seen as we are. It is a good thing to make friends and influence people. It is even more important so to live that when the day's work is over there will be nothing to fear for God will see the true picture. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

# Loyalty

"O loyal to the royal in thyself."

This is an era of testing. The National Film Board employees and staff not long ago were screened for loyalty. Our safety is unperilled in Canada and among the free nations by those who, under rewarding situations might prove disloyal to the nation. Our big problem is that we have built a magnificent outer shell of civilization but we have not built spiritual values as we ought and among them loyalty. Spy-chasing still goes on and it will do so, until something of a deep loyalty to our way of life is rooted and grounded in the youth of today.

I believe in being loyal to the dictates of the still small voice within us. It is well to heed the call and guidance that one has within him all the time. However the compass within may be so neglected that it will no longer function. The question with many people is how they are going to get there and not whether they are going the right way or the wrong way.

John Bunyan endured long years in prison rather than be untrue to his conscience. He said: "The parting of my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as to the pulling of flesh off my bones." One of his children was blind. To think of her being obliged to suffer almost broke his heart. Yet in loyalty to his convictions he remained in Bedford Jail for two years. It is well to be able to live with oneself. It is life and its fullness to be on speaking terms with conscience. It was Longfellow who wrote:

None but yourself can harm you,  
None but yourself who are your greatest foe,  
He that respects himself is safe from others,  
He wears a coat of mail that none can pierce.

In my brief term as chaplain in a Canadian penitentiary, I discovered that the punishment of incarceration while unpleasant, was not unendurable. The young men for whom I felt sorry were those condemned by a conscience that had survived. That is hell—to live in remorse, to look back over a situation one cannot change and feel responsible for it.

Let me read you some lines written by Warwick Deeping

I think my own picture of hell is that of a lonely old man standing on the edge of the unknown and looking back at his past. The past is a great space full of memories and in that space all the memories are dark and sinister. Hardly a hill or a building or a tree catches the light. He looks back upon failure. But upon what kind of failure?

He has failed people. He has failed those who tried to love him. He has hurt and made unhappy those who sought to give him happiness. He has given no happiness, and therefore he has no memories that are happy. He has piled up the hard stones to



built a house of success for his perished self and his house has been nothing but a pile of dead possessions.

It is the broad landscape upon which we look back at the end of our days that should have for us the face of Hell or Heaven. Has it a brightness, a gentleness, the suggestion of something somehow good or is it grey and hard and hopeless?

That is the face of Hell to us and at the end of our days and to know that the landscape you have painted is grey, a place of stones and of the bones of broken memories. Hell is to look back at the dim, reproachful faces of those who wronged us, those whom we betrayed.

It is well, also, to be loyal to the noblest and best person the world has ever known. After conscience is satisfied, our supreme loyalty must be to Jesus Christ. I know of no one higher and I can never be content with any lesser personality. Christ comes first. To Peter on the shore of the lake he inquired, "Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Three times he put that question. That is the only question you really have to answer.

Jesus himself said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." The loyalty he asks of us is a supreme loyalty. When you pledge loyalty to this Christ of God and man you will be in harmony with all other loyalties.

You only will I be loyal to a conscience that is dependable and to a life that is in tune with the infinite. I must also be loyal to a cause that is satisfying. I have fought on when the world seemed to turn him down. He did so because he had an inner sense that he was right. Jesus fought on when many of his disciples went back to walk with him no more. Why did he? Because he knew his cause was right and that through his way of living men would find life in all its fullness. "To this end was I born," said the Master, "and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth."

I recall a sentence from the writing of Reinhold Niebuhr which says, "Narrow loyalties may become more dangerous than selfishness." I believe it is very true and it tells us that our loyalties must be big and wide. It is a great hour when some young person or some older person sees a door opening into a great cause to serve. Let us give our loyalties to the highest and best.

It was Lynn Harrell Hough who said one day, "The tragedy of the world is that men have given first-class loyalties to second-class causes, and these causes have betrayed them." My sincere belief and earnest conviction is that there is no greater cause than the cause of Christ. My prayer is that each one of us may do all we can to expand His Church and to serve His Kingdom well.

Did you realize that there are two marks mentioned in the Bible? They are the mark of the Lord Jesus Christ and the mark of the beast. If you would be his follower, the marks will have to be in your life, the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We'd might we interpret the mind and devotion of St Paul thus "Let no man question my allegiance to Jesus Christ My conscience is clear My cause is good. I have paid the price of loyalty " Yes, Paul spoke confidently when he said, I bear on my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

Robert Freeman points the way for us all in a poem which is rich in Christian insight, and which speaks of that deeper loyalty we all owe to the Lord of Life

Lord of my life, henceforth I bear  
The name of Christian everywhere;  
And all observing eyes shall see  
Such Christ as is revealed in me  
In trade or play, my every word  
With shame or glory my Lord,  
Each act, each generosity,  
Will point to Thee unwittingly  
Therefore, O Christ, my spirit claim,  
And make me worthy of Thy name

## **God Grant Me the Serenity . . .**

*Rest awhile tonight. You have all the time there is.*

On the first Sunday in the New Year Rev. Dr. E. G. B. Foote, Chaplain of the Fleet R.C.N., attended the morning service in our church. A little later he sent me a beautiful lettered motto which is before me at this moment. He has forwarded a copy of it to every chaplain in the Royal Canadian Navy and to all the Sea Cadet chaplains. It is a motto which he himself prizes highly. Let me read it to you:

*"God grant me the Serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
The Courage to change the things I can,  
And the Wisdom to know the difference."*

Rest awhile tonight. You have all the time there is. The Everlasting God rules in the affairs of men even yet. You can find serenity of soul and peace of mind in a world where so many are disquieted and perplexed. If you have faith it can be so for round about you are the everlasting arms, and they are always there. You this night can have peace that the world can never take away. There is no person who does not need serenity of soul. Be still then, where you are.

There are some things in life you can do well. There are tasks for which you have a mind and talent. It is a fearful thing though to be in something beyond your depth. Sometimes parents encourage their children to go on beyond where they themselves were able to go. They want the children to achieve what they did not achieve in life. Many a time a young person never finds anchor age, because of attempting to do what he is not able to do. The task is too heavy and the work too big. It is a great thing to feel confident in what you are doing even though it may be an ordinary task in life.

There are a great many things we have to accept. There is one kind of resignation that consists in folding the hands and giving up, but there is another that is sound and good and wise. We have to accept the fact that there are some things in life we simply cannot do. For one thing we have no control of the larger universe. We cannot even stop the rain. All we can do is to put up our little umbrellas.

I can never forget the year I was on my first junior baseball team and the day I put on my new uniform. It was in the biggest little town in Manitoba—Ninette named after a little French girl who died in infancy. It was the 24th of May, and my uniform was dark grey with brown stripes. I was up bright and early and so was the sun. But the sun grew drowsy and went back to sleep. I started to walk the mile and a half to Yellowlees' store and the rain came down, and the rain increased. A northeast wind came up, and we were in for one of those three day affairs for sure.

When I reached the store I was drenched. The farmers were smiling for it was the very thing they needed. But to a young lad in a brand new uniform, well there he stood and it rained and rained. Life is like that. There are some things you cannot change.

I am thinking of a friend who parted with a substantial part of his meagre bank account to buy a diamond while he was in College. In the spring he went home to work on his father's farm. One day there came in the mail a small registered parcel. It contained a ring that he had seen before. There was nothing he could do. When a diamond ring comes back there is nothing anybody can do. That's that! One day when he went out fencing he took the ring with him and he took a big crowbar. When he was making potholes he struck good granite rock and could not go any deeper. He held up the shining ring and had a little talk with it. Then he dropped it down the pothole, right down to the rock it went, and then he pounded it with the mighty crowbar until the pace thereof knew it no more. God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change!

Remember what Jesus said: "And which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?" There are many things that cannot be changed. We can't change the will of God. We can despoil the surface of the earth a bit, but we can never disturb the music of the spheres. Byron knew that when he said:

Man marks the earth with ruin—his control  
Stops with the shore.

At the heart of the universe there is love and an eternal purpose, and the God who fashioned it in love is the God who sends rain on the just and on the unjust. God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change. And that just means. Make me submissive to a higher intelligence than my own.

We need to remember that there is a great field in which we ourselves are the predominating force for good or otherwise. Grant us then, the courage to change the things we can. What are some of the things we can change? For one thing, we can do something about ourselves. Do you have the feeling that you have arrived? Do you think you are fairly well rounded out? You and I need more than a tune-up. We need to be born again. Long years ago a certain man felt very secure. He was a Pharisee. He belonged to the noblest order in the Jewish faith. He was righteous, good and honorable in all his dealings. He worshipped God, and all the rules were laid down. But one day he met a man who had what he lacked: a man with radiance, a soul and a willingness to go the second mile. They had a long talk in the house-top, and Nicodemus found that he had to have faith in God before he could really live. His whole contented pattern of life had to be broken down. You must be born again. A new beginning can be yours too.

Have you the courage to do something with your life? Are you

really playing fair and square with the Christian Church? The Church today needs you to exemplify the good life as never before. I know you may be thinking, "There's not much the Church can do in a world like ours." But Jesus never gave up hope and confidence that the world could be changed. In spite of the fact that he was alone at the last, and on a cross between two thieves, he never gave up. The world needs the man who will work. It also needs the one who will retain faith and confidence.

The world has many wise men and many learned people. What it needs most of all is a Christian mentality and spirit. We need to hear that early pioneer missionary say again: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." We need a mind that believes in fellowship and good will, and in the ultimate triumph of peace and brotherhood.

It is over nineteen hundred years since He triumphed. But that's not long when you think of all the history before He came to earth. It may just be that if enough of us retain the mind of Christ, the world will yet see greater changes than we know.

God grant us the courage to change the things we can. In a wisdom that enables us to know the difference, may we throw in our efforts where they will count. Let us not waste time in trying to change laws which never shall be broken, for they are eternally right.

## Greatness Passing By

"When the high heart we magnify  
And the sure vision celebrate,  
And worship greatness passing by,  
Our heroes are great."

Shortly before one o'clock this afternoon a silver plane of the Royal Canadian Air Force rose from the Saskatoon airport and passed over the city before being lost to sight in the blue grey of the eastern sky. There was a wistfulness in the hearts of those who saw it depart. It carried the Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. They had been in our midst for two and a half hours and something had entered our hearts that had not been there before.

It was a particularly moving experience to see the Royal Visitors. They symbolize for us all the best in family life, the noblest in church tradition and that intangible something which unites all peoples of the British Commonwealth in one brotherhood.

As I caught sight of the Princess I naturally thought of who she was—the elder daughter of our King and Queen. No one saw her here this morning who did not have long thoughts of the day when she may be Her Majesty the Queen. Never could she look more queenly than she did today. Some of us were left with misty eyes as the Princess and the Duke passed by.

The King's daughter is altogether lovely and the gracious charm of the Duke of Edinburgh made me think of knights who walked in courtly halls.

In Tennyson's poem, Elaine young Lavaline was riding with Sir Lancelot to the tournament at Camelot. Lavaline did not know that his companion was King Arthur's greatest knight. The stranger had spent the night at the castle of Astolat on his way to the tournament. When the lord of the house asked him his name, he replied

since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not  
Hereafter you shall know me

The younger son, Lavaline, accompanied him in the morning. When they were well on the way the Knight confided in him, saying

Hear, but hold my name  
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake

The youth was abashed, but managed to stammer, "Is it indeed?" and then he exclaimed, "The great Lancelot!"

When they reached the lists 'by Camelot in the meadow,' they saw the clear-faced king—King Arthur, 'robed in red samite, easily to be known.' Then, and not till then, did Sir Lancelot answer young Lavaline. He said

Me you call great, mine is the firmer seat,  
The truer lance; but there is many a youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
And overcome it, and in me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not great  
There is the man"

Looking at the King Sir Lancelot the chief of knights, said "There is the man"

Are you willing to humble yourself and to exalt another? Jesus said "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Jesus also said "I speak not of myself, but of the Father that dwelleth in me. He doeth the works." He was willing to recognize a greatness over and above his own.

Can you say "I know well, I am not great?" Can you look at another and say "There is the man?" It is only a "far-off touch of greatness" that makes you able to say it and mean it.

In me there dwells no greatness, save it be  
Some far-off touch of greatness to know well  
I am not great

In the beautiful language of the Chroniclers in John Drinkwater's play, Abraham Lincoln are these words:

When the high heart we magnify  
And the sure vision celebrate,  
And worship greatness passing by  
Ourselves are great

This morning royally passed by. Perchance it passed your home. It touched our lives in what seemed to be a fleeting way. The Princess does not accept our homage as personal to herself. She knows well she stands for and is a symbol of something far greater than herself and far above any of our individual lives. She is not greatness in herself but she represents all that is great and good in the heritage of the throne.

There is much to be said for symbolism in life. The Royal Visit stands for a greatness in which we all have a part. It should call out in us that intangible something that responds to the highest. When your eyes see beauty and your soul sees light at the same time, you can never be the same again.

There is a royalty in all our natures. Sometimes it is obscured because nothing has yet passed by to call it forth. There is One who sooner or later passes. In Jesus is the Highest Heart that ever was. He gave the world Vision—the truest and only sure Vision it has ever had. When His high heart we magnify, and His sure vision celebrate, and when we worship His greatness passing by, then we ourselves are great.

No one has ever truly influenced mankind who has not been there when Jesus passed by. If you have missed him you have

missed the greatest procession of all time. But he does not go by in pomp and splendour. Often he goes, a lonely figure. He passes quietly, and sometimes as he goes he pauses and knocks at your door. Perhaps you have not been listening. But he will come back. "He gently knocks, has knocked before." He too is a Sovereign. He is the "Sovereign of Souls." He too is a Prince. He is the "Prince of Peace."



## ***Greet the Unseen with a Cheer***

*One who never turned his back but marched breast forward*

Among the last words that Jesus uttered to his disciples were these: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

In the upper room, before going out to endure the darkness of the night and the loneliness of desertion, he took a towel and a basin and went about washing the disciples' feet. He wished to show them, by such a shadow of soul that would's ambition and self-abandon has no place in his heart, a kingdom. He humbled himself. He took upon himself the form of a servant.

Peter, when his turn came, protested vehemently. He would not have his Master and Lord wash his feet. This was the task of a slave. But there had been no slave or servant at the door of the upper room that night as they entered, and they had refused to stop to do this lowly task themselves. Jesus soon silenced Peter. He said to him: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

Then, as they sat together at the Last Supper, Judas could not endure the love-intensified gaze of his Master very long. He went out into the darkness of the night, and the darkness of the night was as nothing in comparison to the blackness of his soul. It was only after Judas had withdrawn of his own accord that the fellowship of that little group reached a hostile unity. A barrier was down. Understanding, we prevailed. It was then that Jesus unburdened his soul to his men. He said to them:

*"Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, ye at once come that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."*

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

What he was saying to them was this: "You will find life filled with trial and trouble: but in spite of that, you can be at peace. I have won a victory over the world that the world can do for me. As I have succeeded so be with you if you possess my spirit." He was fully aware that the forces of evil had closed together to usher him off the stage of life. He saw the black clouds rolling in, and knew that the storm would break over his head. He saw the Cross looming up in certainty on Calvary's hill. For months he had known what was going on in the minds of the scheming chief priests. He knew how fickle a crowd can be. He knew that time was running out, and so he gave to his own disciples these words of strength and encouragement:—"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

For us of today, one of the poets has put it thus:

The crown of empire—must thou yield it now?  
 Childer was of thorns they pressed upon his brow.  
 Did friends, as foes, desert thee in thy power?  
 More—*and not war it with thee one single hour.*  
 Is all this—*Is all this*—dark, though shame and loss?  
 (Between two thieves I hung upon a Cross)

I have overruled the world. It was in this faith he had lived. It was in this faith he would if need be die. It was to such a faith he challenged them that night on which he was betrayed.

Above a Jesus Christ was a realist. He did not evade the issues. He told his men, the truth. First of all, he stated emphatically that life has its dark side. In the world we shall have tribulation. We cannot escape this fact in statement of Jesus. More and more we are coming to see that a spite of all our modern conveniences we have a world that is filled with trouble. The word "tribulation" comes from the Latin "tribulare" — meaning a threshing sledges dragging over one. In our world the whole human race is being threshed and this is undoubtedly through this threshing and winnowing process that we shall ultimately see what is chaff and what is wheat. We are being tested.

Yes, life has its dark side. But it also has its bright side. Evil cannot conquer when good is strong, as in Jesus. I gain some encouragement and confidence from knowing that the world did not win out over him. This Master of life here certainly was victorious over a world of sin. If we possess his spirit, we like him think like him, speak like him, care like him, love like him, and I need be die like him, the world cannot win out over us. In the long run a people that is truly Christian has nothing to fear.

In this world there is darkness caused by man's ignorance and his lust for power. In the world we have tribulation. There is light created by the Divine which cannot be extinguished. Therefore be of good cheer. Like Christ you can be calm amid confusion. You can live a life that creates light not darkness, hope not fear, love not hate. You can be a creator not a critic. You can render a good account of yourself in this world, but you must remember that in this world too you will meet with sadness and trials as well as with joy and success.

It was Henry Van Dyke who wrote these twelve beautiful lines:

If all the skies were sunshone  
 Our faces would be tan  
 To feel once more upon them  
 The cooling splash of rain  
 If all the world were music  
 Our hearts would often long  
 For one sweet strain of silence  
 To break the endless song  
 If life were always merry  
 Our souls would seek relief,  
 And rest from weary laughter  
 In the quiet arms of grief

In a church magazine I read an article by Dr. William L. Stidger of the School of Theology, Boston University. He began by relating a story told by William J. Cameron. It is a story of 'A Farmers Hiring Fair' in Yorkshire. To these fairs there came all the neighbouring farmers to hire their help for the coming year. There were of course other features to the fair such as prizes for stock, cakes, pies and needlework and all the rest. But on the whole the fair was a hiring fair.

One exacting farmer found a tall, broad English boy whom he liked very much. When he asked him what he knew about farming all the boy would say was, 'I know how to sleep on a windy night.' That was all the farmer could get out of him for he was a modest shy boy and was a strong boy. But he did not know how to put his power in the shop and so asked the farmer to tell him how to sleep on a windy night. If that's all the boy knows, I try to see where. He went about the hiring fair but did not find another boy who pleased him on the whole as much as the boy who knew how to sleep on a windy night. He went back and hired him and took him home to the farm.

Several nights later there came up a terrible storm in the night. The farmer was awakened and began to worry about whether the terrible Yorkshire wind would blow his haystacks over. He wondered if the barn doors were closed. He asked the new boy but could not awaken him so quietly was he sleeping. Finally he went out to the barnyard alone. First he went to the barn and found that all the windows and doors were securely locked and fastened tightly so that they did not even rattle. He went to the chicken pens and found all of them tightly and fast to the ground with the doors closed. He walked over to the haystacks and found much to his surprise that every one of them was firmly tied down with ropes running over in four directions. The ropes were tied to firm stakes which had been driven into the ground six feet.

He went back to the house and chuckled as he passed the room where the lad was still snoring away and chuckled by the husky winds that were trying to batter the farmhouse down. With deep satisfaction he said to himself, 'Now I know what the boy meant when he said he knew how to sleep on a windy night.'

To be sure it is just a story, but I often think of its implications. You and I can have peace in a world where fierce winds blow if we know that we have done our best in every area of life.

When you have done all you can for the cause of Christ and for his Church and for peace on earth and good will among men, you need have nothing to fear. You have the 'peace that passeth all understanding' even though the world may do its worst. You can say with Jesus, 'I have overcome the world!'

## ***Vision to Turn Aside***

**"While beauty burns and yet is not consumed"**

Last Friday evening I dropped in at the Saskatoon Art Centre and was greatly impressed with the fall showing by local artists. In all fairness I must say that for a city the size of Saskatoon, the quality of its artistic work is of a very high nature. I do not feel that I can mention any of the paintings in particular, but some of them did inspire me to bring you the message that is ours This Sunday Evening.

One who is a lover of nature cannot look upon a scene that has been captured forever on canvas without hearing a voice that speaks of the God who created it. Some of the paintings I have seen recently have made me think of Moses that day when "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. It is on that theme I speak to you tonight—The Burning Bush.

The Burning Bush is the symbol of the Presbyterian Church. It also appears on the crest of the United Church of Canada, representing the Presbyterian churches that came into the Union in 1925. Its meaning is found in the inscription that accompanies it on the emblem "Nevertheless it was not consumed." The bush burned but it was not consumed. It represents the undying flame of the Church of Christ in the world today.

For forty years Moses kept the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro and nothing out of the ordinary happened. Then on a never-to-be-forgotten day when he was in the back pasture of Midian, he caught sight of a bush on the mountainside. It was on fire, yet it did not burn.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight,  
why the bush is not burnt.

And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called  
unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And  
he said, Here am I.

And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off  
thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

It is generally believed by those who should know, that the bush Moses saw in the back pasture of Midian was the rubus, a shrub with a thorny spine and a red blossom. Dr W. L. Stodger tells us that "The monks in the Convent of St. Catherine have planted this bush back of the 'Chapel of the Burning Bush,' showing that they think it was this rubus which incidentally grows everywhere in Palestine." I recall once hearing my Uncle Duncan MacLeod of Formosa speak of a tree in Japan called "The Flame of the Forest." He said that every year in the springtime it was covered completely with bright crimson flowers.

Only last week in the home of the sisters of Tom Thomson, the Canadian artist I saw paintings which have not been shown outside the home. In several magnificent ones I saw trees, Muskoka trees, aflame with God. No wonder Moses heard a voice saying: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Who among us is so intense live to the resplendent coloring of God's brush as not to bow in reverence?

If you and I are to see a bush aflame with God, we must come upon it in the course of our everyday work, as Moses did. It was not in the Egyptian court amid palatial splendour that Moses came to know God. It was in the pasture of Midian, away from man-made things that he heard the voice.

Arthur Wentworth Hewitt has written a book about the rural parish. He calls it *God's Back Pasture*. Let me read a paragraph from its preface:

Why do I name the book *God's Back Pasture*? Readers who have lived on mountain farms know of the pasture from which the cows come home at evening. It is near the barn. That the young stock and the sheep, so often to be seen straggling along here in the back pasture, fill up the foreground. It often reveals the farm, just as a back pasture I accept the conclusion that it is a sort of for every body knows that it is from the back pasture that the most beautiful landscape is seen. Shall I ever forget a back pasture which I crossed in the high lands of Scotland? I crossed a great ditch and pressed upward through a tangle of heather, upward, over grassy slopes and steep rocks, watched by black-faced sheep on the mountain slopes above me. But when my climbing was done, I stood on the summit of Ben Venue."

In contrast with that, there was a sonnet in the *Atlantic Monthly* which spoke of "well-paced gentlemen who sit in leather chairs and smoke their cigars by the plate-glass windows of metropolitan clubs engaged meanwhile in setting fat wots, like tombstones, over dead ideas."

Those who have seen revolutionary figures in the world have come from the back pastures of life. Abraham Lincoln was in the back-pasture when he caught sight of the Divine. Jesus Christ was in the back pasture if ever a man was. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" the people asked.

I think too, that the Burning Bush speaks to us of the great hours in a man's life. For years life had been a matter of routine for Moses, and then all at once his years of schooling were ended. The shining road of service was before him. Think of your life tonight. You went quietly along and nothing great ever happened. Then perhaps some great experience was yours and life was never the same again. God became real and certain to you.

Andrew and Peter, James and John were fishermen. Night after night they put out their nets and early every morning drew in their catch of fish. One day was the same as another. And then

one day—one great day—there stood on the shore of the Lake of Galilee a stranger. Their hearts began to burn within them, and they left all and followed Him. Life was never the same again.

It is a great day when God becomes real to you. Then life takes on a new and glorious meaning. If that experience has not been yours, I pray that at this moment you may see the glory of God and hear the still, small voice calling you into the real life which is yours.

Not only does God school us in solitude, not only does he strike our spirits wide awake at strange places and times, but also he calls us to a costly service. Once Moses was assured of the presence and power of God that day, he heard a command demanding enough to make him shudder. "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh: that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt."

"I will send thee unto Pharaoh." Someone has written, "Every man is born with a Pharaoh on his hands." It is not for me to say what your Pharaoh in life will be. I know not what mission in life God has for you, but I do know that there was never a greater need for liberators than now. And let us remember that in some obscure place another Moses may at an unexpected time see the flaming bush and go out before the mighty saying, "Let my people go." God wants your worship and reverence. He wants your appreciation of His creation. Beyond all this he wants your help to set his people free. I know of no better way you can help him than by your wholehearted support of the work of the Church of Christ around the world.

I began by speaking of paintings and now I close on the same note. Two that I prize most of all hang in my own home. One of them, the work of Leon Manuel, a Vancouver art teacher, was his parting gift to me. It portrays a turn in the road in the sagebrush country near Penticton. This painting symbolizes life, for it speaks of a road that leads beyond our sight and of the faith that at the last we shall safely reach Home. It reminds me of lines from Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

All roads that lead to God are good,  
What matters it, your faith or mine,  
Both centre at the goal divine  
Of love's eternal brotherhood.

The other painting is done by Cecil James, a Saskatoon artist, whose work will grow in stature as the years go on. In this painting which for persons, reasons means much to me, he has depicted the fall willows in golden brown against an autumn sky. It makes me think of those lines by Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush affire with God,  
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.

And so This Sunday Evening I leave with you the prayer that  
when you look upon the glorious works of God that bear witness to  
the majesty

Of Him who moves among them as of old,  
To you may vision come to burn aside  
While beauty burns and yet is not consumed  
To put from off your feet the shoes of pride  
Aware of holy ground  
To hear God speak and answer, Here am I

## ***My Letter to Mary***

*From the glimmer we have into past nature and spend our sense no  
desire for recognition beyond the rest of the mothers of Israel*

**Dear Mary**

It may seem presumptuous on my part to write to so exalted a person as you, and yet I feel quite calm in doing so. I am sure that your personality has not changed, and for me you are the same person you were in the little town of Nazareth many years ago.

From my childhood I grew deep love and admire you. Especially as the Christmas season draws near to you ring a bell in the soul of us common people. You belong to us. The Christmas Story is its uncorrupted and realistic setting for a us of your journey to Bethlehem and of how in our hour of great need you were turned from the door of the door. You know why there was no room for you and your husband, Joseph. You were both wearing homespun garments, and the innkeeper could see at a glance that you were not the kind of people who would press your demands. Perhaps he was trying to make a name for himself by having the right kind of people as guests. He knew of your need, he had eyes to see, yet he continued to worship before the altar of expediency.

I hope Mary, that you did not have your true self obscured for so much as you symbolize today for some of us who have hearts to understand. The mothers in the war-torn areas of the world who are being turned away in their time of need. I am one who believes that if you were back on earth you would not be seeking any self-glorification or acclaim, but that you would be working on behalf of the orphans and the widows of today.

To be sure Mary, I wish we had more information about the life you lived in Nazareth. We know you were obliged to go down to Bethlehem with your husband, Joseph, because he was of the house and lineage of David, and Caesar Augustus had decreed that all the world should be taxed. Even though you should have remained at home you had no alternative but to go on that long journey to Bethlehem. The law was law, and human life was cheap.

We are all aware that because of the adamant and mercenary attitude of the innkeeper your son Jesus was born in a stable. We know of Herod's cruel method of trying to destroy the child Jesus by having the lives of so many little children. We know you were warned in a dream to flee to Egypt. We would like to know more about the experiences in Egypt.

After the tyrant Herod died you returned home. How I wish I knew more about the life you lived with your family in Nazareth! As we are given in the great Book that you took Jesus to Jerusalem when he was twelve years of age, that he might be initiated into the religion of his fathers. No story Mary, throbs



with human interest more than the one which tells of how you went a day's journey homeward before you discovered his absence thinking all the while that he was walking with kinsfolk and friends of Nazareth.

Then was your anxiety heightened. To lose a child in a great city like Jerusalem was perilous indeed. Every parent knows just how you felt when you found him comfortable and contented, answering and asking questions in the Temple. Undoubtedly you had plenty to say and suggest. And yet when you asked him

"Why hast thou thus dealt with us?" Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing," he replied. How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? We read that ye kept all these sayings in your heart, Mary. I am sure you must have pondered over them in after years.

Yes we know that He increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. We would like to know of those eventful years that John Oxenham writes about without factual knowledge. When did your husband Joseph die? What caused his death at a comparatively early age? When did Jesus take over and provide for you and the younger members of the family?

Then too I wish it were possible for you to let us know more about your reactions to his going out into the world as a teacher and a builder of the Kingdom of God. Intuitively you must have sensed that he was right in his mission but did you not wonder when he became such a controversial and popular figure in Palestine? You must have trembled when he closed the Book of Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth and in your presence said: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

And what thoughts must have been yours, Mary, when they rose up as you well remember, and "thrust him out of the city and led him to the brow of the hill, wherein their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong . . . but he, passing through the midst of them went his way!"

Then too, we read that you and your other children went down to where he was. The way was becoming dangerous for him and the road ahead looked dark. Like any other mother, you desired to save him, and to bring him back before it was too late. Did he not break your heart when he refused you and his brothers audience after learning that you stood without desiring to speak with him? Why did he just say to him that told him, "Who is my mother" and who are my brethren?" And then he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said: "Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven the same is my brother and sister and mother."

Yet we are told enough to go on. We are fully aware that when you heard of the impending trial and crucifixion you hurried

to Jerusalem. You stood beneath his cross. For all of us you exemplify motherhood at its highest and noblest. In your son's hour of need you were there even though you were powerless to relieve his pain or to bring him down from the cross. One sentence in St. John's Gospel speaks volumes to us—"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother." When the world had done its worst to your son you returned to the city with John, the best friend he had. That is all we know. Perhaps it is enough.

From the glimpse we have into your nature and spirit we sense no desire for recognition beyond the rest of the mothers of Israel. The Gospel writers were so overwhelmed with your son's triumph and victory that they allowed you to go back into the quiet life which you loved, and they magnified only him. Were they right in so doing? The only mention there is of you after the day you went home with John, speaks of you in the upper room at Jerusalem. You were there among those who met for prayer and meditation awaiting the fulfilment of his promise that he would come to his own and all who loved him and abide with them forever. We do not know how long after this you lived, but we can assume that yours continued to be a quiet life of gentle influence.

Yes, they magnified your son, Mary, and we believe that St. Peter who had true insight into the Christian faith, knew the deeper truth when he said, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Writing you this letter as I have done, has helped me to clarify my own thinking on many things. I am confident, as you are too, that Christ is all in all. He alone is Lord. I hope, Mary, though this letter can never reach you, that the spirit and truth of it will reach out into the hearts and minds of many who love Christ and desire to be his true disciples.

## ***The Fire on the Inner Altar***

*The fire that ever be burning upon the altar it shall never go out*

It appears now to be authentic that the German army upon entering Paris in the Second World War extinguished the sacred flame that burned in the tomb of The Unknown Soldier of France. Evidently they believed it would help to break the morale of the people. History may yet prove that in extinguishing that light on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier they unwittingly kindled a flame on a million altars.

From earliest times a constant flame has been the visible symbol of things intangible that go on forever. The perpetual fire of Vesta among the Romans was an emblem of that which unites men around the hearth of fellowship and devotion. The first few chapters of the Book of Leviticus lay down rules for the various offerings and tell how they were received at the altar. One rule that was never broken was this: The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar it shall never go out. Irrespective of the time day or night when worshippers came to the temple the fire in the altar was a ruled and ready. It was never allowed to go out.

We who belong to the churches of Protestantism do not stress the external altar. We believe in the Power that lies back of all altars. We are deeply aware of keeping the fire burning in the inner altar. If that fire should die down and go out we would be in a desperate plight. The fires of faith and mercy and hope must not flicker out. There is nothing more pathetic than to view the ashes and dust of yesterdays and not to have the confidence that the future can be as good if not better than the past.

Oliver Wendell Holmes put it this way:

Grant us Thy truth to make us free,  
And kindling hearts that burn for Thee,  
Till all Thy living altars claim  
One holy light, one heavenly flame

What makes the fire burn on the inner altar? What keeps the flame aglow? I believe that worship does this. In worship we draw near to God because we acknowledge that we are in need of help that he alone can give. We believe that he is the source of all our love and faith. Let us therefore be thankful. Thankful for the privilege of living in this strange bewildering turbulent world. Thankful for health and strength for soundness of mind and body. Thankful for a life to live and a work to do.

We can this night in the background of a great eternity and in the burning light of the eternal be grateful for the disciplining experiences, the hard climb and the lonely walk, the disappointments and the frustrations. We know that all of life's strange experiences make us strong and put fibre into our souls. We ought to be thankful that decency is destined to come out victorious, and that the flame can and will burn on the altar. Despite the philosophers

of hate and strife the flame of righteousness burns above us and within.

The fire burns on the inner altar when we resolve to serve the highest we know, and to give our allegiance to spiritual forces and powers. Perhaps tonight there is someone listening in whose soul the flame of resolution is light or has a most flickered out. I pray that for you the fire may this Sunday evening be rekindled ere heaven has touched the earth with rest. Go back to your work tomorrow with a firm resolution to give your best to the work which is yours, and you will find that the fire will glow again with incandescent beauty and brightness. Jesus always maintained the spiritual glow because he knew that he was working for God and with God.

I am sure that the flame burns in the life of a man or woman who believes in the ultimate triumph of the right and in the ultimate decency of things. I see no reason to be enthusiastic about that which is doomed to fail. Blow on your hands and whistle to keep up your courage if you will. As for me I want the assurance that a good God rules at the end. With him began and with him shall end the day. The future I believe belongs to men of good will, not to those who hate, to the unifiers, not to the dividers, to the creators and not to the destroyers.

We need to sound a note of triumph in our day. Perhaps too much emphasis has been placed on the death of Christ and not enough on the deathlessness of Christ. We have sung about the Cross as though it has finality in our religion. We have not accentuated the note of life for evermore. We need the message of the great hymns of triumph.

Rejoice, the Lord is King  
Your Lord and King adore,  
Mortals, give thanks and sing  
And triumph evermore.  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice,  
Rejoice, again I say, Rejoice.

Never forget that the Christian Church came into being when men were singing of his triumph and when all around were the forces of evil marshalled against Him and them.

Keep the flame burning on the inner altar of your life, and face the future with no uncertain eyes.

I like a little poem by Edward Wight, entitled, "How Do I Know?"

How do I know, you ask, that in the end  
God's power will conquer all, and through  
Eternity His love prove master of our souls?  
Need I have proof?  
I tell you, friend, between a world of chaos  
And a world where God works on,  
Through moments men call time there lies a choice,  
And I choose God.

"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out."

## The Return to the Source

Look to the rock from which you were hewn and the quarry from which you were dug."

The first sermon which I have retained in memory in my child hood was delivered by an am- versary preacher who came to my home town in 1842. Never will I be able to erase from memory his preaching with all its memories. One who never comes fully back but manifests breast forward. His text was "Remember, Let us walk and live as if we were forgotten." No coming and going, no going and coming, was this earnest and careful minister. But as I was to know the rule and a half from that time I thought, "What about the little white house on the hill. I was forgotten, I should forget his words, try and make them sound good and beautiful some years of call. Did not the minister conclude that a preacher's sermon will be the words "Look ahead and back, also a ahead, I'm afraid is behind you?"

We have all been given a feeling over those who indulge in retrospection as does Dr. Buttrick when he writes in his great book on Prayer that "Some important moral truths have been discovered a rare back which flies backward because I know nothing about where it is going, but must know where I came."

In spite of the fact that we are constantly being pulled in new things, look forward looking, venture some, speak out as this afternoon on "The Return to the Source." I speak for this reason. We need a fixed point to stand by, as we endeavor to guide our final craft across the fearful and turbulent seas of life.

Look at this man Isaiah. On the eve of his return to Judah from exile in Babylon, he found the people apprehensive of the future. They were inspired. They had remembered lessons or destiny. Their camps burned because they burned truly. Many were content to remain in Babylon and they did. What did Isaiah do to stir up the remnant of the people? Did he bow on his hands and say "Chase up." No he led something more. He exhorted them one and all to remember Abraham. "Look to the rock from which you were hewn and the quarry from which you were dug." Look at your background. See the kind of stock from which you came. Remember your father was Abraham. Look back upon that fixed point in your history. You are of the house and lineage of Abraham inheritors of a great tradition.

In 1842 Morris I. Tibbatts resigned from Hyde park Baptist Church Chicago to become one of the ministers of Riverside Church New York City. Charles Clayton Morrison editor of The Christian Century attended the farewell reception given in honor of Dr. Tibbatts. As Dr. Morrison walked into the church hall that Sunday evening he noticed on the bulletin board that the subject of the morning sermon had been "Which Way is Progress." Upon being introduced to a gentleman at the refreshment table Dr. Morrison asked "Are you a member of this church?" "Yes" was

the reply "And were you here this morning?" "Yes" his friend answered. "Tell me then. Dr. Morrison persisted. Tell me then which way is progress?" Dr. Morrison's question was abrupt. The answer was whipped back. "Both either it is backward. . . . When is progress backward?" Dr. Morrison pressed. The answer he received was profound. "It is backward," said his friend, "when you have wandered away from home."

Some of us have become skeptical of the word "progress." It is a good word but it is a new and danger-wise one. It is dangerous because it suggests a straight line and life isn't a straight line. Life revolves around a centre. From the smallest electron to the largest planet, life revolves and rotates around a centre. As the choir sang this afternoon:

Centre and soul of every sphere,  
Yet to each loving heart how near!

God must be centre. There is peril in not looking back to the rock from which we were hewn and the quarry from which we were dug. Our world, like the prodigals of long ago, has grown weary of paternal care and oversight and has gone out on its own.

We have learned to airplanes to fly through the air like birds, and in submarines to swim under the sea like fish—someone has written—and all that remains is for us to learn to walk the earth like men. We can never do that until we lose our hatred and differences in the complete and understanding love and care of God.

There is nervous restlessness everywhere. Suspensions abound. Confidence is lacking. Our war might be likened unto Dante's Inferno, where spirits are blown forever in a world that fills the air with intolerable whistlings and where one never comes to rest. All of life is out of joint. Yet can't not be said that deep down in the crypt and abyss of every human soul there is yearning for help. Surely we know now that cleverness and culture will not save us. Let us gain our strength by looking to the rock from which we were hewn and the quarry from which we were dug. As long as God lives, and men are willing to learn, great and wonderful things can happen. I believe in the future because I believe God is. He has not given up. Some of us may be discouraged with the human race. God I know is not. The world may be "too wrecked for man to mend," but never beyond the power of God working through man, to mend.

Furthermore there is peril in not looking back to Christ. I may not know much about preaching. I sense my limitations. But I do know how to row a boat. When I was a very small boy I learned to look back at a fixed point, and then pull on the oars. Christ is the fixed point on our horizon our north star, and unless we steer by his life and teaching we can never arrive at the harbour of understanding among the nations of men.

Someone once wrote "Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. . . . He worked in a

carpenter shop until he was thirty and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his feet inside a tog city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. While still a young man the tide of popular opinion turned against him. He was turned over to his enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth—and that was his coat. When he was dead he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend. Yet after all these centuries have come and gone Christ is still the centre around which all true progress is made.

Edgar Sheffield Brightman has rightly said: "A being who nineteen hundred years after his death can raise civilization to question its own foundations is no insignificant Jewish carpenter. He is a figure of world importance. We cannot pass him by and live on this planet. We cannot go on and leave him behind. We dare not carry atomic power around in this world unless the spirit of Christ is in us."

We follow One who championed the cause of the common people, spoke their language and preached a revolutionary gospel. He was colour blind. He went through Samaria and did not detour, crossing the Jordan twice as did the pious and prejudiced Jews in traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee. And he talked with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. You see so much that is basically good has roots that run down deep in Christian soil to the everlasting resources.

Let us anticipate for our country more men and women who, looking back to a fearless and revolutionary Christ, are inspired to go all out for him and put down political tricksters who make capital out of race discrimination.

Finally there is the cross which towers "o'er the wrecks of time." Beyond the crosses of our day I see a supreme Cross. His Cross was redemptive so ours must be. A friend of mine looking out on the beauties of nature, said "Behold the sorrows of summer." "What do you mean by that?" I inquired. My friend said "When life is at its richest and its best, something or somebody is paying a terrible price."

All our unselfishness, our willingness to share, and our sense of mission in life find their origin in the cross of Christ. Look to the rock, the everlasting rock, "the rock from which you were hewn and the quarry from which you were dug."

Remember your origin and destiny are in God, your master and saviour is Christ, and your inspiration so to live that others might have life, is the Cross which towers "o'er the wrecks of time."

# ***The Child Grew Up***

*You and I have some growing up to be done."*

Well, it's here! Almost here—at least Christmas! You can feel the throb of it, and the hope of it, and sense the meaning of it, whether you live beneath the majestic splendour of the mountains of the West, or on the prairies where you can see in the distance the light burning in your neighbour's window on this crisp winter evening, or where the lonely jackpine keeps vigilant watch on the edge of a Muskogan lake, or where the wash of the wild waves speaks of the enduring in a world in quest of peace.

Houbert, many of us live in cities, for better or for worse, which reminds me of an incident recorded by Arthur Wentworth Hewitt in his book *God's Back Pasture*. He tells of an old pioneer who visited a large city for the first time in his life. On his return he was enthusiastic about all that he had seen—skyscrapers, the subway, and thundering traffic—and all the rest—and after telling about it to his old cronies, he shook his head sadly and said with finality: "But, it will never be a success. It's too far away."

To many a person Bethlehem is too far away in time and space, and the Child born there will never be a success. To the man absorbed in his own little objectives and pleasures, this child in a manger crib has nothing to say. True, he still adds a little wistful mystery to the Christmas season. The innkeeper in his stern inhospitality, the poor peasants of Nazareth, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds of the Judean hills, the Wise Men from the East with their gifts—all these furnish a colourful setting for merry-making. But the deeper meaning of Christmas is too commonly lost amid the superficial and trivial round of well-planned giving and receiving. In the mad rush of December we unwittingly pass by without seeing the Child born to rule in the hearts of the humble folk of the earth.

In *The Christian Century Pulpit* a few years ago I read this arresting paragraph in an article by a well-known American preacher:

Shopping one day, we saw a little boy put his hand inquiringly on a ten-cent Christ part of a crèche. "What is 'his'?" he asked his mother, who had him by the hand. "C'mon, c'mon," replied the harassed woman. "You don't want that!" She dragged him grimly away, a department store Madonna, her mind dark with gift thoughts, following the star of her own devising.

There was the little fellow with his hand on the Child of Bethlehem, and his mother's comment was, "C'mon, c'mon, you don't want that!" How naturally and instinctively the little boy had blundered upon the central matter, the Child of Bethlehem! How little his mother, an early morning shopper with a hunter's look, seemed to know of the God who "imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven!"



In one sense that mother tugging away her little boy and saying "You don't want that," spoke a truth. I too protest against those who would grasp hold of the infant Jesus and retain Him as a helpless babe to admire. We must never forget that Christmas became the day it did because he did not remain in swaddling clothes. He grew up. He grew "in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." The Infant of Bethlehem became the Boy of Nazareth. The Boy of Nazareth became the Man of Galilee, and the Man of Galilee became the Saviour of the World and the Prince of Peace.

In Kensington Gardens, London, England, there is a statue of Peter Pan that quaint and lovable little character created by Sir James M. Barrie. The statue is beautifully described by Violet Storey who wrote this poem after her visit to London several years ago:

The loveliest thing I saw in all of London—  
Except the Princess Lilybet in pink.  
Who is really as much like him, one can't count her—  
Was the statue of Peter Pan. I think!

Tree framed it, overlooking the Long Water  
Above the daisied fields of Kensington,  
Field mice and rabbits round its base and faunies—  
And Peter Pan on top in fog or sun!

Small Peter Pan, who never can grow up now,  
Even if he should change his mind and try,  
Caught in ageless bronze, ephemeral childhood  
Bare-legged and playing a 'flute to passers-by'!

The sentries at the Palace, the Crown Jewels,  
Reynolds, Rossetti haunt me yet—  
But the loveliest thing I saw in all of London,  
Was Peter—except the Princess Lilybet!

*The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up*, is the other name which Barrie gave to his play of Peter Pan. He has retold the play in prose, and here is how the story opens:

All children except one grow up. They soon know they will grow up, and the way Wendy knew was this: One day when she was two years old, she was playing in a garden, and she plucked another flower and ran with it to her mother. I suppose she must have looked rather delightful, for Mrs. Darling put her hand to her heart and cried: "Oh, why can't you remain like this forever." That was all that passed between them on the subject, but henceforth Wendy knew that she must grow up. You always know after you are two. Two is the beginning of the end.

Recently I saw the replica statue of Peter Pan that stands in Toronto. It is in a little park at the corner of Avenue Road and Clair. It is identical to the one in Kensington Gardens, London, and tells us of the boy who never grew up—Peter Pan! But Jesus did grow up. And because he did—because he grew up in every area of his life, he became a complete personality. Soon we shall

celebrate his birthday and we do so because of the maturity he revealed. When he became a man he put away childish things."

You and I have some growing up to be done. Some there be among us who would like a child to fondle and love rather than a Man to follow and serve. This Christ who possessed the greatest mind of all time cannot be kept intellectually in swaddling clothes. Let him take you out into the world of great thoughts, ever knowing that the truth will set you free. Are you growing? Does this Christmas season reveal a finer and more all round person than was here last year, the year before that or ten years ago? The Child of Bethlehem grew up. Have you grown up? If not this evening hour can be one of great beginnings for you.

In spite of all the dark clouds of misunderstanding and strife and war which dampen our spirits, I believe we are living in a day of great beginnings for peace on earth and good will among men. Are you disillusioned and apprehensive regarding the future of the human race? Have you decided that nothing can be done? Surely the reading of history ought to help you see that the darkest hour is just before the dawn. When life is insufferable and all the lamps of hope have gone out, a little child begins crying in some strange crib and a new leader is born.

You have been looking at the dark side. Let this light break through. Never were there so many people who believe in peace in the world as now. Never did this world have a better organization for the prosecution and maintenance of peace than is ours now. The key to peace is in our hands and I am not discouraged. The peace loving of the earth can say with Elijah, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them." Never was there a generation that believed as thoroughly as does ours that "God hath made of one blood all nations to live upon the face of the earth." Never did Christians believe less in narrow denominational loyalties, and more in the universal Church of Jesus Christ than now.

Yes, Christ can grow up, have air to breathe and a life to live, as in no other period of history. Above all, let us remember that God is with us and if God be for us, who can be against us? Herod can plot our destruction, Judas can sell us out, and Pilate can hand us over, but our God will lift us up, if the spirit of the Prince of Peace be in us.

"Are you willing to believe that Love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than death—and that the blessed Life which began in Bethlehem is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? If you are, then you can keep Christmas. And if you keep it for a day—why not always?"

## ***Go Down Again to the Depths***

*"I shall dig down to God who is within me."*

It is a beautiful day in Saskatoon. I wish I could paint for you the gorgeous pageantry of colour that met my eyes as I paused a few minutes ago on Spadina Crescent and looked across the river towards the University of Saskatchewan. For the magic touch of autumn has already transformed the leaves and one riotous stretch of crimson and gold extends from bridge to bridge. The sun is shining brightly here today, and the air has a slight tang of things to come.

Yes, it is a beautiful day in Saskatoon and it is a wonderful day here in Knox Church beside the river for we had as our guest preacher this morning none other than the Very Rev. Dr. George C. Pidgeon from Toronto and his presence has been a benediction to us all.

This sanctuary today is decorated in flowers of gold for we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the opening of our first church and also the 65th anniversary of the founding of the congregation. I hope that many friends of Knox are listening in across Canada and that as you hear our choir and organ you will be carried back in memory to the days when you worshipped here. To every one of you I extend warmest greetings from the church which I know you still love wherever you may be.

I am thinking too of friends in Kidonan, Chalmers and Shaughnessy and of the great Canadian congregation of listeners unknown to us personally but bound to us by ties of Christian love, as we all worship together on this September afternoon. It is a great privilege to have this fleeting visit with you.

I thought I could do no better than to speak to you on the theme, "Go Down Again to the Depths." One spring afternoon when I was in my Fifth Grade in school I returned home to find a well-drilling outfit in our yard. Our neighbours the Marseys and the McElroys had each a new well and so it was decided that we should be in style. It was argued by the senior members of the family that our supply of water was not adequate and that there would be no saying when the well might go completely dry. It had happened before in our community and there was no reason why Providence should continue to shine on us.

I vividly recall the discussion over drilling costs—40 cents a foot if water was struck and \$1.25 a foot if an adequate supply was tapped. It was the general consensus of opinion that an abundance of water would be found before a sixty foot depth was reached. After the expert who came from the next town east had gone about divining here, and divining there, with his willow stick, he was of the same opinion. After all, the old well was only thirty-two feet deep.

I shall never forget how the gravity of the situation pressed in on me as I listened to the conversations. No water at 90 feet 100 feet 150 200 300 feet. Finally a meagre supply was tapped at 366 feet. The new well was a colossal failure. Consequently, after a few years had elapsed, I was decided to deepen the old well and take chances, so being the supply already there. After digging down eighteen inches in hard shale, an abundance of water was secured. Need I tell you that the new well was capped over, and the old well met all our needs.

This all came back to me as I reread the story of Isaac. "Isaac dugged again the wells of water." The Philistines filled them in again and again, the wells which Abraham had dug. They were jealous of Isaac's prosperity.

However, every time they raided his area and filled in the wells, Isaac quietly and quickly had them reopened. He was not a pioneer. He did not open up new territory. He did not dig new wells. Isaac was quite content to use the good wells which had been provided by those before him. He loved the sanctities of home, and had no desire to acquire other people's lands. The world needs the man who uses what he has, and there is nothing wrong in an old well if the water is good. Like Isaac we too, can rediscover some of the old wells to good advantage.

For one thing, we need to redig the old wells of personal faith and religious conviction. The wells of our faith need cleaning out periodically. Without our knowing it, the waters can become contaminated. The Philistines are still at large, and they do their work so quietly and so thoroughly, that one is sometimes oblivious to what has transpired. Poisonous infiltration goes on down below, where it cannot readily be seen. Then too, the rubble of materialism, and the drifting sands of creedless life fill in our wells, until it is difficult to drink from the depths which quench the thirst.

When Sherwood Eddy was a young man he went to India as a missionary. He began his work with great enthusiasm. But after a time his enthusiasm subsided. His strength became seriously depleted. He grew discouraged. The Indian situation became well-nigh intolerable. Then in the hour of great need, he tells us that he heard a voice saying:

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Dr. Eddy realized that he had failed because he had not tasted from the old well of personal faith and religious conviction, and in his hour of desperate need he dug down to the unfailing adequacy of God.

Perhaps the Philistines have filled in the wells of your personal faith. Let me say what I believe. Only that person who has

quenched his thirst from the depths below the surface can stand up to life around him. Dig down until you strike the underground streams of refreshment and peace. Then, and then only, will you become a pillar of strength and an invincible personality, in a world where so many people know not where they are going.

It is a costly business having a faith of your own. But it is worth it. While there are some things that you can borrow from other people, there are great things, such as your faith, that must be your own. These few lines from a poem by an anonymous writer, portray Christ in a language that has a personal application:

He borrowed the bread when the crowd He fed  
On the grassy mountain-side,  
He borrowed the dish of broken fish  
With which He satisfied.  
But the crown that He wore and the cross that He bore  
Were His own—  
The cross was His own.  
\* \* \*  
He borrowed a room on His way to the tomb  
The Pasover Lamb to eat;  
They borrowed a cave for Him a grave,  
They borrowed a winding-sheet.  
But the crown that He wore and the cross that He bore  
Were His own—  
The cross was His own.

Furthermore, we need to redig the old wells of accountability to God and responsibility to men. I feel myself accountable to the God of all the worlds. I believe that the vast and great God of all creation sees us one by one, and loves each one of us as if we were the only child he has. I believe that our lives are marked up and down in value by the thoughts we think and the life we live. And there is nothing unscientific or old-fashioned in believing that there will come a day when our examination papers will be marked and our standing known. The restraining and compelling influences of such a belief are not without merit. If one believes that death ends all, and that there is no accounting or responsibility to a higher authority than that of man, then life becomes a cheap and temporal drama. If you believe that your fellowmen are only stuff, you can use them as some nations do, for your own uses and ends. But when you believe them to be God's eternal folk, how different is your attitude! The world needs people who care. Jesus knew this, and he said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Finally, let us dig down to the Love that never faileth. I attended a General Council of The United Church of Canada at which Kagawa spoke. He may not have said anything new, but perhaps he did say more than any other man in all the world, for he was saying it to a group of people who knew the story of his life. He spoke from the greatest pulpit in all the world—he spoke from the

cross; and the radiancy of his smile and the buoyancy of his spirit made us all capture the Love that never faileth.

I would like to read you a few lines from the Prologue of his book *Love the Law of Life*. Here we see "The Man with the Hope."

Therefore, I do not lose hope, nor do I fear when I see this drought in the land. I shall dig down deeper, still deeper, into my soul, and there, in my heart of hearts, shall I find the spring of love which can never be found on the surface. I shall dig down to God who is within me. Then, if I strike the underground stream that murmurs softly in the depths of my heart, I will tenderly cherish this oasis of the soul—so rarely found—and to it will I lead a few thirsting comrades.

When we have a faith of our own, a high sense of mission, and a love for people, then we possess the exuberance of soul that enables us to sing of

A joy no language measures,  
A fountain brimming o'er,  
An endless flow of pleasures,  
An ocean without shore.



